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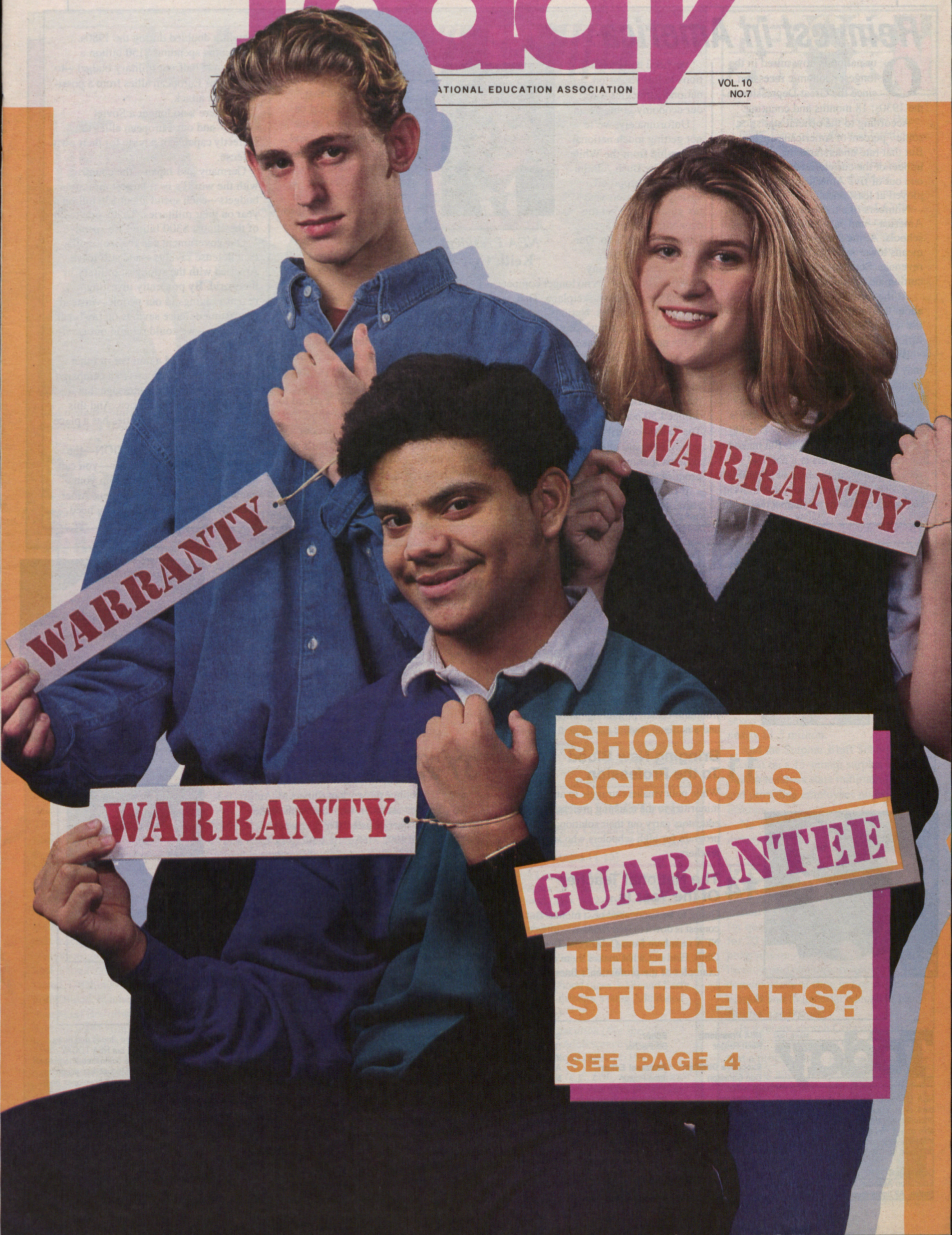

SHOULD SCHOOLS GUARANTEE THEIR STUDENTS?

SEE PAGE 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Reinvest in America

Our nation is now mired in the longest economic recession since the Great Depression in the 1930s: 18 months and counting.

According to the official statistics, some 7 percent of Americans are jobless. But that rate understates the broad impact of the current recession. In 1991, one out of five Americans was unemployed at least once.

Numbers like these are bad news for America—and particularly bad news for schools. At the state level, recession means lower sales and income tax revenues. State governments respond by cutting aid to education.

At the local level, taxpayers anxious about their jobs vote down local school tax levies. The result? School district furloughs, layoffs, salary freezes.

But the biggest losers in the recession may be our nation's children. Recession means that more kids come to school hungry or shivering or even abused.

Not every community, of course, is feeling the squeeze. Some pockets of relative prosperity do exist. But make no mistake about it. This is a national recession, and, in the face of a national recession, there's only so much individual states can do to set themselves right.

We need national solutions to this recession, national strategies to get our economy going again.

Unfortunately, we're not getting much national leadership from the White House. The Bush Administration has proposed a variety of election-year tax gimmicks to get the economy moving again. Gimmicks won't do. Our problems go deeper.

NEA President
Keith Geiger

Our economy, many observers now fear, is no longer competitive in the global marketplace. That shouldn't surprise us. Nations like Germany and Japan are making the investments necessary to make their people productive citizens. We aren't.

Our federal government's investment in education and training as a percent of the gross national product (GNP) dropped 50 percent during the 1980s. The federal contribution to transportation, water, and other infrastructure systems that make our people more productive fell by one-third.

If our federal government doubled its current spending on infrastructure, we'd be investing in America, as a percent of GNP, at the same level we did back in 1976.

If we doubled that amount again, we'd be back to the level of the Eisenhower years—and only then would we have brought ourselves roughly to the current rate of domestic investment in both Germany and Japan.

One example of that investment: Germany offers every young child three years old and older public education in preschools where each class has one teacher for every 14 kids. German children start their formal elementary education ready to learn.

Meanwhile, here in the United States, we're not even fully funding Head Start, a program that serves only the poorest of our young children.

Some would argue we can't afford to make the investments in education, health care, and other areas that our nation so desperately needs. That's not true. With the end of the Cold War, we have a wonderful opportunity to make progress.

Our federal government's military spending doubled during the 1980s. We're now spending $150 billion a year—over half our military budget—to defend our European allies from a possible Soviet attack.

But there's no longer a Soviet Union—and our European allies are perfectly capable of paying for their own defense.

Germany and Japan—the countries with the world's next largest military budgets—each spend about $30 billion a year on their militaries. That's one-tenth of the almost $300 billion we spend.

Our government can realize significant defense savings—and still leave America with the strongest military in the world. By prudently investing defense savings in our people—instead of wasting defense savings on tax-break gimmicks—we could rebuild our economy.

NEA has joined a number of other organizations and groups in a campaign to send politicians the message that it's time to reinvest in America. And this Campaign for New Priorities has a place for you.

By calling 1-800-92ACTION—the Campaign's toll-free number—you can have letters sent to Congress in your name demanding the investment America and our schools so critically need.

Inside

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You decide—after meeting Lauren Resnick. A few years ago, she was a behind-the-scenes expert on student assessment. Now she's front-and-center, promoting national standards and a national student assessment system.

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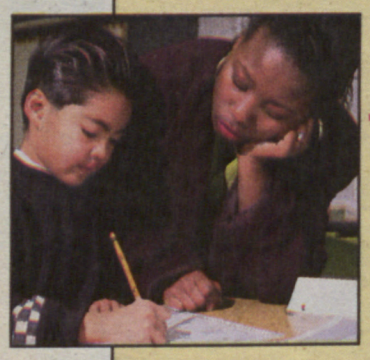
Yes, says an Arizona educator: the time has come for teachers to be accountable for student learning. No, it hasn't, counters an Oklahoma teacher. We don't control enough variables to take credit or blame.



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NATIONAL NEWS

Peter Glass

NEA member Marian Galbraith-Jones (center) discusses an assessment issue with the rest of the team that's now working at the Connecticut Department of Education on Early Adolescence/English Language Arts certification.

National Certification: It's Really Coming

Here's how you know: more and more teachers—maybe even some in your school—are helping develop and test its components.

Five years ago, national teacher certification was a blip on the radar screen—probably friendly, but maybe not.

"People were concerned that the developers of the assessments that teachers would take would not value teachers' views," recalls Marian Galbraith-Jones, then local Association president in Groton, Connecticut.

Today Galbraith-Jones, a middle school reading teacher in Groton, has no doubts about the developers: she is one. The Connecticut Education Association board member is a half-time consultant at the state Department of Education in Hartford, where a team is working on the national assessment in Early Adolescence/ English Language Arts.

"At my level—the contractor level," Galbraith-Jones says, "I can guarantee that teacher input is valued."

The engine behind national certification is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The foundation-funded, teacher-majority (32 of 63 members) Board was founded in 1987 to devise a way to improve teaching practice by assessing the abilities of highly accomplished teachers and awarding them national certification.

After four years of acting primarily at the policy level, the National Board has turned to the development phase, letting contracts for the design of the assessments—the stuff the candidates for certification will actually have to do.

Now the Board needs teachers to test these procedures. In April, it will award field-testing contracts to specific sites that will involve teachers nationwide.

The testing process for every candidate for national certification will include something like an assessment center (simulations of teaching activities), a school-site portfolio (documentation of the candidates' own teaching), and a subject content test.

Galbraith-Jones's team has developed four kinds of simulation exercises for the assessment center in Early Adolescence/ English Language Arts: a cooperative group discussion, an instructional analysis, a student learning exercise, and a planning exercise.

"Our job," Galbraith-Jones says, "is to smoke out the big problems. Teacher volunteers try out the exercises, such as the group discussion that leads to consensus. When we revise, our goal is to be authentic."

The school-site portfolio for Early Adolescence/English Language Arts is being developed at the University of Pittsburgh, where another Association member, Penny Pence, an English teacher on leave from the Armstrong district in Pittsburgh is in charge of field-testing.

"Our portfolio is a 3-inch thick notebook with plastic compartments for videos, artifacts, written explanations—whatever candidates decide to use to document their own teaching," Pence explains.

Across the country, more than 30 different assessments, organized by subject and level, are or will be under development. (see box) All the assessments will be introduced between 1993 and 1996. Early Adolescence/English Language Arts will be one of the first.

"Working on the assessments has had a tremendous effect on my own teaching," Marian Galbraith-Jones notes. "Now I look at what I do and think, How would this look in an exercise? And I think I stand up to my own scrutiny."

—Nancy R. Needham

Certification Fields/Levels

Generalist: Early Childhood (ages 3-8), Middle Childhood (ages 7-12), and Early Adolescence (ages 11-15)

English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies/History: Middle Childhood (ages 7-12), Early Adolescence (ages 11-15), Adolescence and Young Adulthood (ages 14-18+)

Art, Foreign Language (specific), Guidance Counseling, Library/Media, Music, Physical Education/Health: Early and Middle Childhood (ages 3-12) and Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood (ages 11-18+)

Vocational Education (five specific areas): Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood (ages 11-18+)

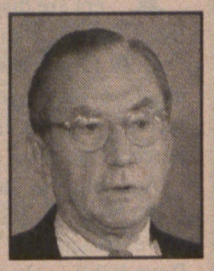
Special Needs (e.g., ESL, special education): To be added as a third dimension to certification in fields described above.

For more information, write National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 300 River Place, Suite 3600, Detroit, MI 48207, 313/259-0830.

HEROES & ZEROES

Check it out! Former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency William Colby recently called for halving the defense budget. Qualifying for the Most-Unlikely-Graceful-Entrance-into-the-Post-Cold-War-World Award, Colby told assembled reporters "a rational defense force can be constructed ... on about half of the present defense budget."

Speaking at the Washington, D.C., news conference that launched the NEA-backed New Priorities, Colby said the cuts, made over three to four years, "would free $150 billion a year for all those other threats to our national security—the threat of AIDS to our young people, the threat of crime in so many third world pockets in our cities, the threat of educational deficiency."



New values fit old warriors well.

The You-Need-Some-New-Priorities Award goes to the Lone Star State of Texas. Despite the availability of nearly $600 million in new state aid allotted for school districts, 76 percent of districts responding to a Texas State Teachers Association survey reported either cutting or freezing teacher pay.

A few examples: the Sterling City School District cut starting salaries by $1,282 a year, while accumulating a seven-month operating surplus of nearly $1.5 million.

And the Sulphur Bluff School District sat on a 15-month surplus while paying teachers state minimum salaries and providing employees no health insurance.

No one's pretending there's enough money to go around, but pul-ease!

The Your-Priorities-Are-On-Target Award goes to David Crippens of public television station KCET in Los Angeles. A voice for quality educational programming for 20 years, Crippens has produced programs on AIDS, drug abuse, family literacy, and ecology. In addition, he donates scads of time to Los Angeles schools and to national education foundations and boards.

In a recent speech Crippens commented: "What better way to ensure that a program is engaging and informative than to require it meet the demanding needs of a teacher and a classroom full of students?"

COVER STORY

Student GUARANTEES:

Either way, dozens of school districts around the country are backing up the quality of their graduates with warranties. "If Johnny can't read," they say to local businesses, "send him back."

To hear them tell it, the vast majority of America's employers are disgusted with the quality of today's high school graduates.

Only 12 percent of hundreds of employers surveyed last year say most recent graduates can write well; just 22 percent find them adept at math.

According to the survey, cosponsored by the Committee for Economic Development and The Business Roundtable, only one-third of employers believe that most recent grads can read and understand instructions.

That means, said pollster Louis Harris upon releasing the data, that "over six in ten employers...view recent [high school] students as bordering on functional illiteracy."

Chrysler's Lee Iacocca calls that "a problem of customer satisfaction." As he wrote in a recent newspaper column, "If the customer tells me the car is a lemon, I get my people working overtime to find out why, and fix it."

Iacocca and other leaders in business work the consumer confidence angle, too. Witness the phenomenon of the "five-year-or-50,000-mile guarantee."

Now dozens of school districts across the country are stealing a page from Iacocca's book. They're offering their customers—local businesspeople—guarantees that their graduates can do the job and promising to "fix" any "defects" that slip through.

The question is: Are these education guarantees improving "the product"?

Calling the move to guarantee students part of the "accountability trend," author and prognosticator John Naisbitt estimates that "a growing number of high schools—68 at last count" are offering student warranties.

While that's a minute percentage of the nation's 23,000 secondary schools, guarantees are tough to dismiss as fad.

The idea first surfaced in the late 1980s in rural and suburban districts. But in the last few years, urban school systems like Denver and Los Angeles have adopted warranty programs. Officials in New York City say the nation's largest school system may be next.

Moving beyond cities, Colorado and West Virginia have adopted warranty programs statewide. Talk is that other states, including New Jersey, Michigan, and Indiana, may follow suit.

Guarantee programs vary widely from place to place. Some guarantee students for one year, others for three. Some guarantee simply that a student is "functionally literate in arithmetic, reading and writing," while other guarantees are based on standardized test scores or lengthy evaluation forms of students' performance in dozens of skill areas.

All promise retraining at no cost to the employer—some at the high school, some at night school, and some at cooperating colleges and universities.

Despite the differences, the programs seem to have one thing in common—so far, they get few or no students returned.

To Jane Russell, president of the 920-member Education Association of Plymouth and Carver in southeastern Massachusetts, no news is good news.

Lisa Griffin

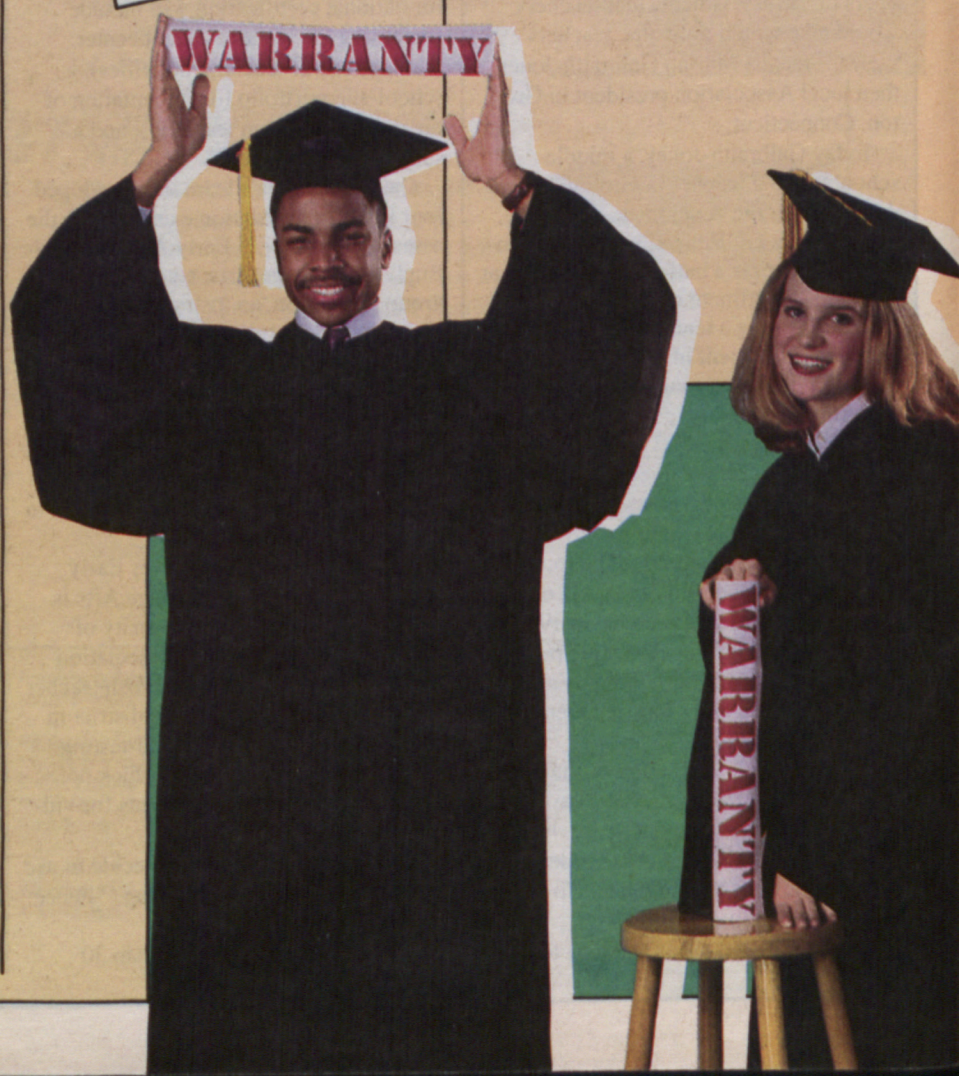
"The warranty program has done a lot to help solve our PR problems, but it's too bad, at this point, that it won't do much to help improve student achievement."

—Rae Garrett, president, Denver Classroom Teachers Association

Bob Riha, Jr.

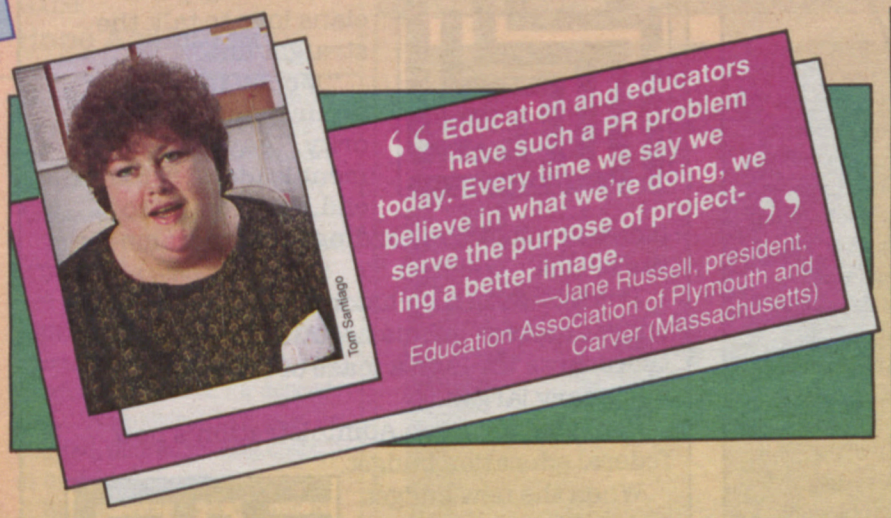
"This promise of a warrantied diploma is a scam, a fraud perpetrated on the public....The diploma warranty is a new method to demoralize teachers by telling us to provide more with less."

—Helen Bernstein, president, United Teachers of Los Angeles



COVER STORY

Real Reform—Or PR Ploy?


Tom Santiago
"Education and educators have such a PR problem today. Every time we say we believe in what we're doing, we serve the purpose of projecting a better image."
—Jane Russell, president, Education Association of Plymouth and Carver (Massachusetts)

After two years of guarantees and 1,000-plus warrantied graduates, no students have been returned.

"We're saying we're willing to put our money and our programs where our mouths are," Russell says. "We think we're doing a good job, and so far no one has told us we aren't. I see this as a vote of confidence in the job we're doing.

"Education and educators have such a PR problem today," she adds. "Every time we say we believe in what we're doing, we serve the purpose of projecting a better image—and that is part of our business nowadays."

No argument here from Carl Lancaster, president of the 6,300-member Prince George's County (Maryland) Educators Association in suburban Washington, D.C. Three years and 9,000 guaranteed graduates after the Prince George's program started, the county has only had two students returned. (Both chose to leave their jobs rather than return to school.)

"It's one effort to say to the public that we are in fact producing a quality product," Lancaster says.

West Virginia's statewide warranty plan—created by legislation and state board of education action—includes specific remedial help *before* graduation.

Starting this year, schools will offer "skills improvement programs" to ninth graders who perform below locally-specified levels on mandatory statewide standardized tests.

Remedial classes—offered in reading, math, and language arts—will be followed by retesting. Warranties, when first bestowed in 1995, will be good for five years.

"Frankly," says West Virginia Education Association Executive Director Dennis Giordano, "I think business and industry should provide a guarantee that's this good."

In Colorado, all members of the graduating class of 1995 will receive diplomas certifying that they have the skills their local school boards deem necessary for employment or post-secondary education.

While the state isn't mandating warranty programs, it's encouraging them, and, so far, 19 Colorado districts have adopted them. Reaction from teachers hasn't always been positive.

Rae Garrett, president of the Denver Classroom Teachers Association, has two bones to pick with Denver's new plan, set to take effect in 1995. First, she says, teachers weren't involved in its development. Second, the guarantees are based on a standardized test that Garrett says "isn't terrific."

The district's plan "has done a lot to help solve our PR problems," Garrett acknowledges, "but it's too bad, at this point, that it won't do much to help improve student achievement. It should be able to do both."

"Our main goal," she adds, "is that the program truly address issues of student achievement and real-life skills." DCTA is now involved in coalition work to "rewrite the program to make it more educationally sound."

Teachers' reactions to warranty programs have been strongest—and angriest—in Los Angeles.

No surprise: Superintendent Bill Anton announced his new warranty plan just days after announcing cuts in teachers' pay, increased class sizes, layoffs for support personnel, and other drastic "money-saving" measures.

"In spite of having less of everything that matters," writes United Teachers of Los Angeles President Helen Bernstein in a recent newspaper column, educators are now expected to "do more than has ever been done before."

Bernstein's conclusion: "This promise of a warrantied diploma is a sham, a scam, a fraud perpetrated on the public....The diploma warranty is a new method to demoralize teachers by telling us to provide more and more with less and less.

"Anton," Bernstein writes, "has just created another piece of paper with no plan to build a curriculum to make it meaningful."

Bernstein's comments help spotlight the tough questions all student warranty programs raise—questions you may want to ask yourself if a warranty program is imposed or contemplated in your school district or state:

- What percentage of graduates from your school system are now prepared for the world of work or higher education?
- Assuming the answer's less than 100 percent, what's the best way to make sure more students are prepared?
- How will a student warranty program work? Will educators be involved in formulating it? Who will be responsible for implementing it?
- What will a warranty program be expected to accomplish? How will it be evaluated?
- Will a warranty program be backed up with meaningful change in school curriculum and with remedial help for those who need it? How will it improve prospects for those in the bottom half of the graduating class?
- Will a warranty boost public confidence in public education?
- Finally, will a warranty program make today's students better prepared for the workplace of tomorrow?

—Stefanie Weiss

HUMAN RIGHTS

Fair Pay, the Cooperative Way

When union and management work together, realizing common goals, such as fair pay, is especially productive and enriching.

This is especially true in Appleton, Wisconsin, where the Educational Support Personnel Association (ESPA) and Fox Valley Technical College have made cooperation one of their long-term goals.

According to Yvonne Matz, ESPA president since 1985, the good feelings produced by past joint efforts keep increasing. "We've disagreed, even pounded the table," she says, "But we know we both have the employees' and the college's interests at heart, and we respect each other. That's made all the difference."

ESPA and Fox Valley are currently trying to achieve pay equity by reclassifying the college's support staff. Both the union and the college are unhappy with the existing classification system.

"It's so outdated," says Bernice Herdina, Fox Valley's employment manager, "that we've been reclassifying people job by job, year by year."

Having abandoned two previous attempts to reclassify all support jobs, college management decided a year ago to join ESPA in bringing in the NEA Job Evaluation System.

The NEA system, called "Fair Pay—We're Worth It!" is custom-made to bring pay equity to school support jobs. Specifically tailored to school settings, it helps affiliates, colleges and universities, and school districts base pay scales on the actual requirements of a job and on the worth of the job to the employer.

Eliminating wage discrimination isn't quick or easy—pay equity projects can take one to three years to achieve results. To speed the process, NEA works first to train state and local staff in how to eliminate wage discrimination. Then staff work with local affiliates in a three-phase program.

► First, staffers teach members about pay equity.

► Second, local Associations conduct a study about employees' work, using a specially designed questionnaire and existing job descriptions.

They also recommend changes, such as revised pay scales and use of the study findings to generate new job descriptions.

► Third, the Association writes those changes into contracts through collective bargaining or political action.

ESPA member Carol Radtke cochairs with Herdina the joint labor-management Reclassification Committee that coordinates the Fox Valley program. A look at how Radtke's job has changed over the years explains the need for reclassification.

In 1973, Radtke worked part time at Fox Valley. "Back then I used pencil and paper to register students for classes," she says.

Today, with an Associate of Arts degree in accounting and a bachelor's degree on the way, Radtke is technical assistant for the college's business division.

"I still register students, but I use a computer to do it. And I 'activate' courses so students can register for them." Radtke also arranges special courses that Fox Valley instructors teach employees of local businesses. And she performs secretarial duties.

Because computers enable her to generate data quickly, Radtke can and does respond to the school's increasing requests for analyses and reports. As a result, her responsibilities are getting more complex, and her job is continuing to be redefined.

According to ESPA President Matz, many of the Association's 225 members are in similar situations. Their classifications don't allow for the evolution of their jobs.

The NEA system solves this problem by recognizing that school support staff work in a technological society and in a unique setting, kindergarten through higher education.

So NEA's classification system adds to the factors commonly used in job evaluation three new factors that are school-specific—responsibility for assets, people, and programs; nature and purpose of personal contacts; and coordination, organization, and facilitation.

Thanks to Radtke and Herdina, ESPA and Fox Valley have completed two phases of the pay equity project. Phase 3 began in January and will most likely end at the bargaining table this July.

As a joint venture, most say the Fox Valley project has been a success, with both sides chipping in some basics to move the project along.

Besides paying for program events, the college has made meeting rooms available, provided release time, and photocopied reports and data.

ESPA has organized employees and paid for postage. And Hank Krokosky, executive director of the nearby Winnebagoland Educational Staff Council, which includes ESPA, has provided overall staff coordination.

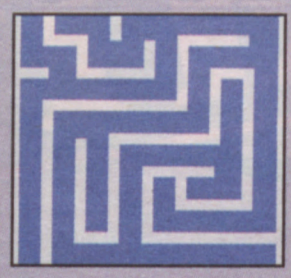
NEA makes "Fair Pay—We're Worth It!" available to state affiliates that meet eight criteria, including commitment to pay equity, engagement in ESP organizing, and ability to share financial and staff responsibility for the program.

If you'd like to have a pay equity project in your local, ask your board of directors to request one through your state Association.

—Mary Faber
NEA Human and Civil Rights

WASHINGTON WATCH

The Money Maze

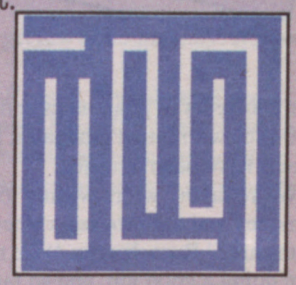


When it comes to education funding, politicians love to talk the straight line.

"Money for schools is our number one priority," say government leaders. "To that end, we promise to increase education funding and programs for the nation's children."

But following the rhetoric through the budget process means negotiating a serpentine course through a maze of rhetoric and budgetary jargon.

Consider the Bush Administration's new federal education budget.

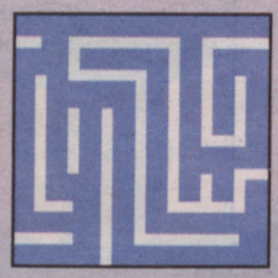


When the new budget proposals were released, Administration officials hailed the $32.3 billion package as a 7 percent increase in school funding.

A closer look tells a different story. When the real dollars are counted, public schools face deep cuts instead of increases.

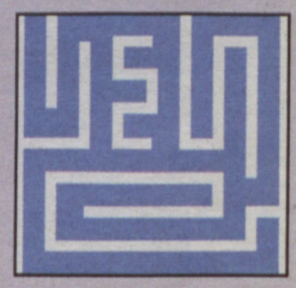
How about funds for Chapter 1, the highly successful compensatory math and reading program for disadvantaged students? The Bush proposals would convert the program into a voucher mechanism, diverting some $7 billion from public to private schools.

And the $450 million Chapter 2 block grant program? The Administration asks states and school districts to 1) use the funds to cover cuts in other programs, 2) use the funds for vouchers, and 3) use the funds for state-based reform efforts. States may also fold funds into a larger state block grant for health care, environmental programs, or anti-drug efforts. That's a lot to expect one pile of money to do.



What do public school advocates discover when they finally make it through the maze of rhetoric and sleight-of-hand?

Budget proposals that would eliminate 34 separate programs and cut spending for 14 other programs for a total loss to schools and students of $1.1 billion in Fiscal Year 1993. Cuts in aid that translate into real numbers: 200,000 fewer students served by Chapter 1 programs and 700,000 fewer college-aged students receiving grants.



And who's asked to pick up the slack if these cuts stick? State and local governments whose budgets are already stretched paper thin.

It's time for New Priorities.

Local Look

MAINE

Hope Against Hope

The issue is health insurance. And after two years of mediation, factfinding, and arbitration, the 10-member Hope Teachers Association is standing firm.

The previous contract between HTA and the school board paid 100 percent of the premiums for both single and family coverage. The school board wants to stop providing insurance for dependents. "A single teacher could get married, thus increasing costs," as the board chair put it.

But the board was willing to give a small raise for each year of a two-year contract.

Keep your raise, said HTA. And let us keep our fully paid insurance.

In January, the board began paying only 90 percent of health premiums, unilaterally putting into effect nonbinding recommendations of the arbitration panel. But Maine practice is to maintain the provisions of the expired contract until a new one is signed.

"I just can't believe they really want to do this," says HTA President Barbara Williams. "We've made proposals that would save them money, but instead they're pursuing legal action that will cost thousands."

MARYLAND

Fighting Furloughs

In Prince George's County, Maryland, school board officials came up with one way to trim the county's $10 million education deficit—a one-week furlough of the county's school employees.

Not so fast, responded the Prince George's County Education Association—a one-week furlough constitutes a temporary layoff, making school employees eligible for unemployment pay.

At a marathon school board meeting, PGCEA President Carl Lancaster warned that if the furloughs took place, PGCEA would lodge unemployment compensation claims on behalf of the county's 12,000 school employees.

The cost to the board: more than $2 million in state unemployment benefits.

The board then proposed to spread the furloughs over several weeks to avoid the compensation payments. PGCEA plans to fight this furlough as well.

"School boards have to realize that these measures only hurt the people they're trying to help," says Carl Lancaster. "We'll keep fighting to get that message across."

IN IOWA CITY

Joe Di Dio

Iowa City educators have joined forces with business and community groups to adopt a set of guidelines for businesses that hire students. The guidelines include suggested limits on the number of hours students are allowed to work each week.

Kids' Work Isn't Child's Play

The movement to regulate high school student employment so students can concentrate on school is getting a boost from an Iowa City coalition of educators, parents, students, and local businesses.

West High School English teacher Brooke Workman and some of his students started the ball rolling several years ago when they began conducting research on the effects of employment on school attendance, homework, and grades.

"Our research indicates that after 20 hours [of paid student employment], things start breaking down," Workman says. "I believe in working, but there comes a point when a student isn't going to make it."

To affect local policies, Workman and a group of Iowa City Education Association members organized the Child Labor Alliance for School and Society (CLASS).

The organization adopted six voluntary guidelines for businesses that employ Iowa City students. The guidelines say that freshmen and sophomores may not work more than 10 hours a week; junior and seniors, 20 hours a week. Also, freshmen and sophomores can only work till 9 on school nights; for juniors and seniors, it's 10:30.

So far, several dozen local businesses have agreed to follow the guidelines, and local politicians, unions, and parents have endorsed the Alliance's efforts.

As a result of pressure from educators and other concerned citizens statewide, Iowa's legislature is now considering revising the state's child labor code.

ALASKA

A Raise, Not a Bonus

A year of bargaining. Eight months of working without a contract. Now the 2,100 members of the Anchorage Education Association are waiting for an arbitrator's decision.

AEA and the school district disagree over several issues, but salary is paramount. Rather than provide any raise, the district proposed giving a one-time bonus of $2,000 to each teacher. And subtracted from that bonus would be any salary adjustment a teacher earns for education credits or longevity.

AEA initially proposed a 15 percent increase. AEA President Belinda Daniels points out that since 1985, the salary schedule has increased by only 1.5 percent. For six of those seven years, there was no increase at all. Now the two parties are at impasse.

"We've been doing informational picketing at schools and district headquarters, attending school board meetings en masse, and in some schools working to the rule," Daniels says. "The arbitrator's decision will determine our next move."

LOUISIANA

No Way To Budget

When parish administrators proposed a three-day shutdown of schools to recover a $2.7 million budget shortfall, teachers said "no way."

The East Baton Rouge Parish Association of Educators filed suit in the parish civil court, asserting that teachers were contracted to teach 180 days and the three-day shutdown constituted a violation of the contract.

"Our message is two-fold," says local Association President Linda Kelly. "We want to recover the salary that was denied us, and we want to be treated fairly. If there's a shortfall in the budget, don't take it from us."

To avoid future budget battles, the board has agreed to push for a millage increase next year. If it passes, $20 million would be raised for pay hikes and other expenses.

ARIZONA

ESP Local Takes Off

In August 1991, eight classified employees in the Sierra Vista School District were "associate members" of the teachers local. By January 1992, a 95-member Sierra Vista Classified Association had come into existence, won the right to represent the district's 240 school support employees, and was fielding a bargaining team.

What happened? A familiar story: "The district pushed us off the ledge when they told us they were going to cut the top off senior salaries," explains SCVA's first president Louis Coppola, "but the teachers Association accepted us with open arms and helped us get our own group started."

TENNESSEE

Prep Time Pressure

An intense campaign by the Metro Nashville Education Association (MNEA) paid dividends recently as the local school board voted $570,000 to restore planning time for K-6 teachers.

The teachers lost their prep time last fall just after Nashville had lost $11 million in state funds. The state board changed its policy allowing physical education teachers to take double classes so other teachers could have planning time. The new policy also gave "regular" teachers some responsibility for teaching p.e.

MNEA at first lobbied the state board to change its policy. When that body refused, MNEA went to the local school board, which voted the funds to restore the prep time.

"This doesn't solve all the problems we have because of budget cuts," explains MNEA President Helen McMackin, "but it's a step in the right direction."

State Side

MINNESOTA

'Charter Schools'

A new Minnesota law that encourages licensed teachers to start and run their own independent public schools came to life last month when the state approved its first "charter school."

That means a Montessori school in Winona may open next fall with $3,050 per pupil in state aid—but without being obliged to obey state education rules and laws.

The Minnesota Education Association and other education organizations strenuously opposed the legislation last spring, calling it a back-door approach to a statewide voucher system.

MEA President Bob Astrup says charter schools could create a two-tiered system of education, operate with lax enforcement of standards, and "siphon valuable resources away from a creative, high quality system of education."

Minnesota's is the first state legislature to approve charter school legislation, but similar laws are being considered by lawmakers in California, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Tennessee.

LITTLE HOPE FOR IMPROVEMENT

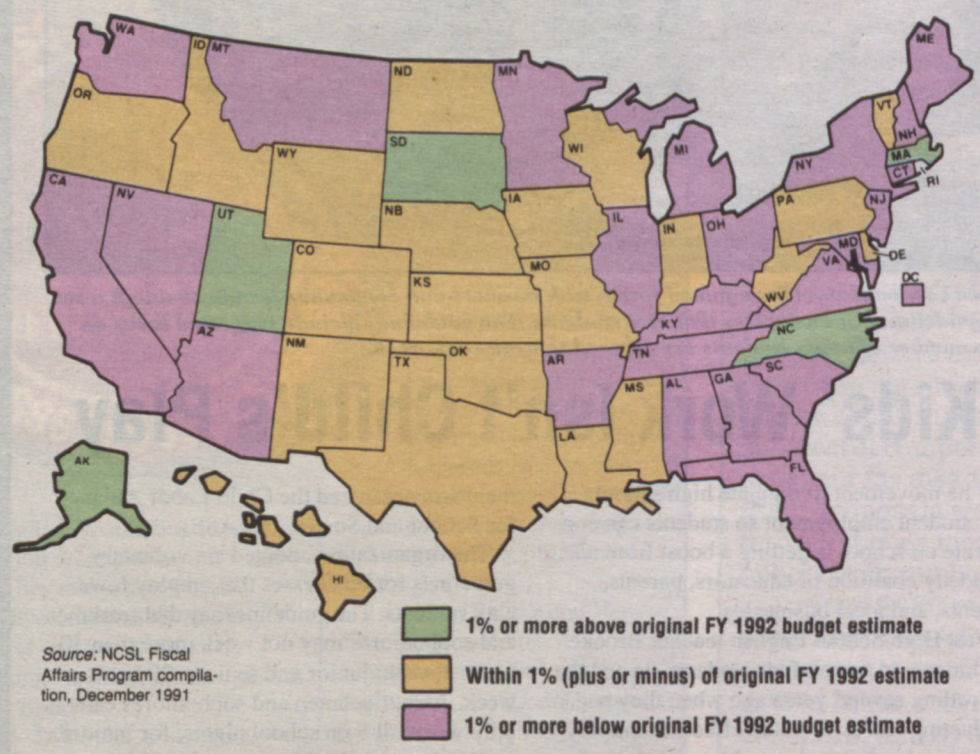
State Budgets Hurting

A new study of the states' fiscal health confirms what most education employees probably already know: states are hurting and they're cutting programs, including education, in an effort to close the gap between revenues and expenditures.

Some 30 states indicate their tax revenues are falling short of original estimates, according to a National Conference of State Legislatures' survey.

Overall, says the report, most states are now in "poor fiscal condition." The exceptions are the Plains states and the Rocky Mountain states.

How is the rest of the year shaping up? Says the study: "There's little hope for improvement...Deterioration continues slowly."



Source: NCSL Fiscal Affairs Program compilation, December 1991

FLORIDA

Taxing Times

FTP-NEA, in coalition with the Florida Education Association United (the state's AFT affiliate), is pushing "One for Florida," an initiative calling for a total overhaul of the state's regressive tax code.

Meanwhile, Governor Lawton Chiles recently proposed allocating some $600 million of new tax dollars to fund K-university education programs for 1992-1993. The new funds are part of Chiles' $1.35 billion tax hike proposal.

Currently 70 percent of the state's revenue comes from its general sales tax.

Chiles' bill would levy taxes on such services as dry cleaning and cable television as well as broaden the state corporate profits tax.

Asserts FTP-NEA President Jeff Wright: "Unfortunately, the shock waves of recession and the cost of funding 100,000 new K-12 students leave our school districts in a precarious financial situation. Even if the well-intentioned tax proposal passes, our tax base is so inadequate that only major reforms will work."

WASHINGTON

Trying To Stop Cuts

It was official: Teachers in Washington State were to get a 3.6 percent pay raise in 1992-93. Then the recession hit—and instead of the $2 billion surplus the state enjoyed two years ago, Washington was faced with a $900 million revenue shortfall for the current two-year budget period.

As a result, Governor Booth Gardner proposed that not only the pay raise, but also $40 million in education programs, be cut from the budget.

The Washington Education Association ran a media campaign during the first two weeks of this legislative session, urging members to call their representatives and voice objection to the proposed cuts.

WEA President Carla Nuxoll told the lawmakers, "It's important not to cut public education in a time of financial crisis. The only thing that will ensure long-term economic stability is a strong school system."

At press time, the state's house of representatives had passed a budget proposal that includes a 3 percent raise for teachers and restores most of the program cuts. The senate has yet to be heard from.

VIRGINIA

Solidarity for Schools

For the first time in history, the Virginia Education Association and the Virginia PTA stood together at the state capitol, rallying their members and lobbying their legislators to save the state's schools from more than $100 million in proposed cuts.

More than 2,000 members of the two organizations were joined by NEA President Keith Geiger and other education leaders in their effort to increase funding for the state's financially strapped, overcrowded schools.

To show their support for the joint rally, many of the state's superintendents gave employees time off to attend the school-day rally. One VEA local even paid for substitutes so members could attend the event.

The rally is part of a statewide campaign alerting educators, legislators, and the public to the crisis in Virginia schools. Last fall, more than 100 VEA local presidents delivered 45,000 signed letters urging Governor Douglas Wilder and the General Assembly to do something to save the state's schools.

NEW YORK

Heading Off Hate

"The Klan is active in a community nearby, and skinhead groups have tried to get contacts among our students," says Ann Wolfson of Beacon, N.Y. A few years back, pieces of hate literature were found in Beacon's 350-student high school.

Beacon is no isolated case. New York State was the site of 254—more than 1 in 4—of the anti-Semitic vandalism incidents reported nationwide to the Anti-Defamation League in 1991.

Small wonder NEA-New York has moved to help members make their schools inhospitable for hate groups.

"When Hate Hits Home" is NEA-NY's leaflet blueprinting positive action. It outlines personal, curricular, and Association steps to stop hate at the schoolhouse door—and help push it out of the community.

Some 170 Association members had the chance to hear a similar message when they attended NEA-NY's recent minority leadership conference.

The panel on stopping hate, said one, "provided the information that all people, minority or nonminority, need when confronted with hate. But most important, it gave us strength."

TEXAS

Here, Deja Vu Redux

In a 7-2 decision on January 30, the Texas Supreme Court threw out the legislature's latest plan for equalizing school funding—a scheme that less than a year earlier the court had advised would pass constitutional muster.

The latest discredited plan (at least the 6th to be held unconstitutional in this case), was enacted in 1991. It creates 188 county education districts (CEDs), authorizing them to collect taxes and equalize revenue distribution among the school districts within their boundaries.

The two dissenting justices contend that the majority's ruling in effect forces the legislature to enact a state income tax (which Texas has never had). They say it's the only practical and clearly constitutional option left open. The majority disagrees.

At press time, Texas Gov. Ann Richards was calling for a special session of the state legislature this summer in order to put the new taxing districts on the ballot in the November elections.

The reason: the Texas high court ruled that the CEDs amounted to a statewide property tax, which is unconstitutional.

Meet:

Photographs by Keith Srakocic

Lauren B Resnick

Agent of Accountability

How do you measure students' progress? Who should set standards of achievement—and what should they be?

Earlier this winter, the National Council on Education Standards and Testing recommended that those standards be set—and students' progress assessed—at the national level.

Does this recommendation—from a 32-member panel of public officials, educators, and business leaders created by Congress—mean we're headed toward a national examination system?

NEA Today's *Anita Merina recently put that question to the University of Pittsburgh's Lauren Resnick, an education researcher whose work on assessment and accountability has helped shape the recommendations from the education and standards panel.*

Resnick co-directs the New Standards Project, a research effort funded by grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and Pew Memorial Trusts to develop a national student performance assessment system.

What's wrong with today's system of measuring students' performance?
What currently exists in educational testing is a set of tools that no longer fit what we're trying to do.

These tools—standardized tests—were more for sorting people according to basic assumptions about talent, learning, and knowledge. They created a system that is deeply unfair—some kids can work to the standard, others don't know what they're up against.

What we have out there are a bunch of tests that discourage effort, tests that don't measure kids against a standard of achievement but against a percentile.

Why not eliminate testing altogether?
It would be nice *for teachers,* but I don't think it would be good for the children. We're not in this for our own pleasure, and we have to be willing to be judged on our work. The question is, what is to be judged? The New Standards Project is trying to create an external evaluation system that would answer that question.

Should teachers fear being judged by their students' performance?
If it means a mindless version of merit pay that ties pay to results, or the use of a single standardized test that leads to various manipulations of the results and pressure to teach to the test, then teachers should be afraid, because these are awful ways to assess teachers.

But teachers also need to think about the form of accountability that would make sense, because this entire system is about checks and balances. You can't leave teachers alone.

My message may make some uncomfortable but it's absolutely unfair to put high standards on kids and not on educators. We need a system that will help educators improve their own work.

What would that new system include?
The first step would be to establish a set of standards. With those in place we can work on the details and forms of assessment. The second would be to include some form of performance examinations, and the third would be a portfolio.

The New Standards Project is designed to explore the forms this system should include; testing alone is not the answer.

Are teachers involved in the process?
Absolutely. No real positive change occurs unless the process is deeply embedded in the schools themselves—and that means the teachers.

Every state that engages teachers in the process from the beginning not only benefits but offers an exciting form of staff development.

If we're going to be assessed as a group, we have to determine what kinds of control we have. That comes full circle to site-based decisionmaking.

Are you talking about establishing a national curriculum?
No. Not a curriculum but a set of national curriculum standards. We've adopted the term *content standards,* developed out of extensive discussions among educators, members of the public, and community leaders.

Will this system safeguard against the inequities that exist today?
The testing system itself can't safeguard fairness. You can and must be aware of aspects of assessment—in wording or content—that might not be fair to certain groups of students. But you can do that until you're blue in the face, and you still won't address the disadvantages.

The fundamental unfairness doesn't lie in the assessment process—it lies in who has the chance to learn. A better assessment system will do little if teachers continue to teach in overcrowded classrooms and buildings that are unsafe, and if they lack materials to do the job.

What do you think about school districts that issue warranties? ***(see cover story, p. 4)***
The underlying idea that all students leave school knowing specific skills is moving in the right direction, but I don't believe that many of the plans offer anything but more of the same to returning students.

The fundamental question that's not asked is 'Why would the student want to return to school?' A student isn't merely a toaster you can send back to be fitted with a missing part. That student didn't learn certain skills for a reason and the district must find out why and offer an alternative. Unless the student is willing to relearn those skills, the warranty model won't work.

What's the Standards Project timeline?
We're field-testing a shared system of assessment and standards in 17 states and 6 districts. We're trying to identify common learner outcomes in mathematics and language arts.

We'll be looking at three things: how the system works, what the new examinations will look like, and any new forms of assessments that arise. By spring '93, we hope to field-test fourth grade exams in math and language arts. They'll include performance examinations and a portion of what we'll call a Cumulative Accomplishments Record—similar to portfolio collections of student work. By '93-'94, we'll be using these performance exams and Cumulative Accomplishments Records in thousands of classrooms.

The key in all this is that we build in self-study, research, and critiques, particularly from educators, so we won't move forward unless we know we're helping educators.

IDEA EXCHANGE

Getting To Know You

Want to learn who's who in your class as early in the school year as possible? Aurora, Colorado, teacher Gayle Erskine finds that student photos help.

The Prairie Middle School teacher takes individual pictures of each boy and girl and labels each with the student's name.

She uses these photos instead of cards in a seating chart.

Besides putting names and faces together, it keeps kids from switching seats. The system is also a great help for substitutes.

A Pin Is Worth 1,000 Words

Ornamental pins are perfect for writing rebus stories.

Oklahoma teacher Connie Connely of Catoosa Elementary School uses them when she composes these stories—in which symbols or pictures replace some words—for her primary learning disabled students. The pins serve as the symbols for words.

Connely displays the stories or appropriate seasonal messages in her classroom. In one brief example, recreated at left, she made use of a rabbit pin and a basket pin from her extensive personal collection.

"I have a jewelry box full of these seasonal brooches, too many for me to wear," says Connely. "Now I've put them to good use."

Where Is Waldo, Really?

Orange, Connecticut, library media specialist Kristine McHarg helps students at Peck Place School hone their geography skills.

McHarg oversees a schoolwide version of a "Where Is Waldo?" contest, called "Where in the World Is Waldo?"

Each Monday morning, McHarg reads three questions—one for students in grades 1-3, another for students in grades 4-5, and another for the faculty—all containing clues as to Waldo's whereabouts.

Based on these clues—using library, computer, and classroom references—everyone tries to guess where Waldo is. McHarg collects all the answers in a special box located in the school library media center.

The goal is to move Waldo across the country from Orange to San Francisco by the end of the school year. Fifty correct answers move Waldo 50 miles. Although Waldo's progress is the only reward, McHarg says the kids love the game.

Know Your Classmates Eggsactly

Every spring, Kentucky teacher Ellen Adams sponsors a unique springtime egg hunt in her Wingo Elementary third grade classroom.

Adams buys plastic eggs and fills them with candy and other goodies. After labeling each with a student's name, she gives it to a different child.

Each student then hides the egg and writes a letter to the designated child, telling where that egg is hidden. ("Go to the north wall, walk to the bookcase, look on the right...")

Adams collects and delivers the letters. One by one, the recipients open their letters, read them aloud to the class, and start searching for their eggs.

Excitement and giggles are not the only outcome of this hunt. The kids also learn to carefully write and read directions, notes Adams.

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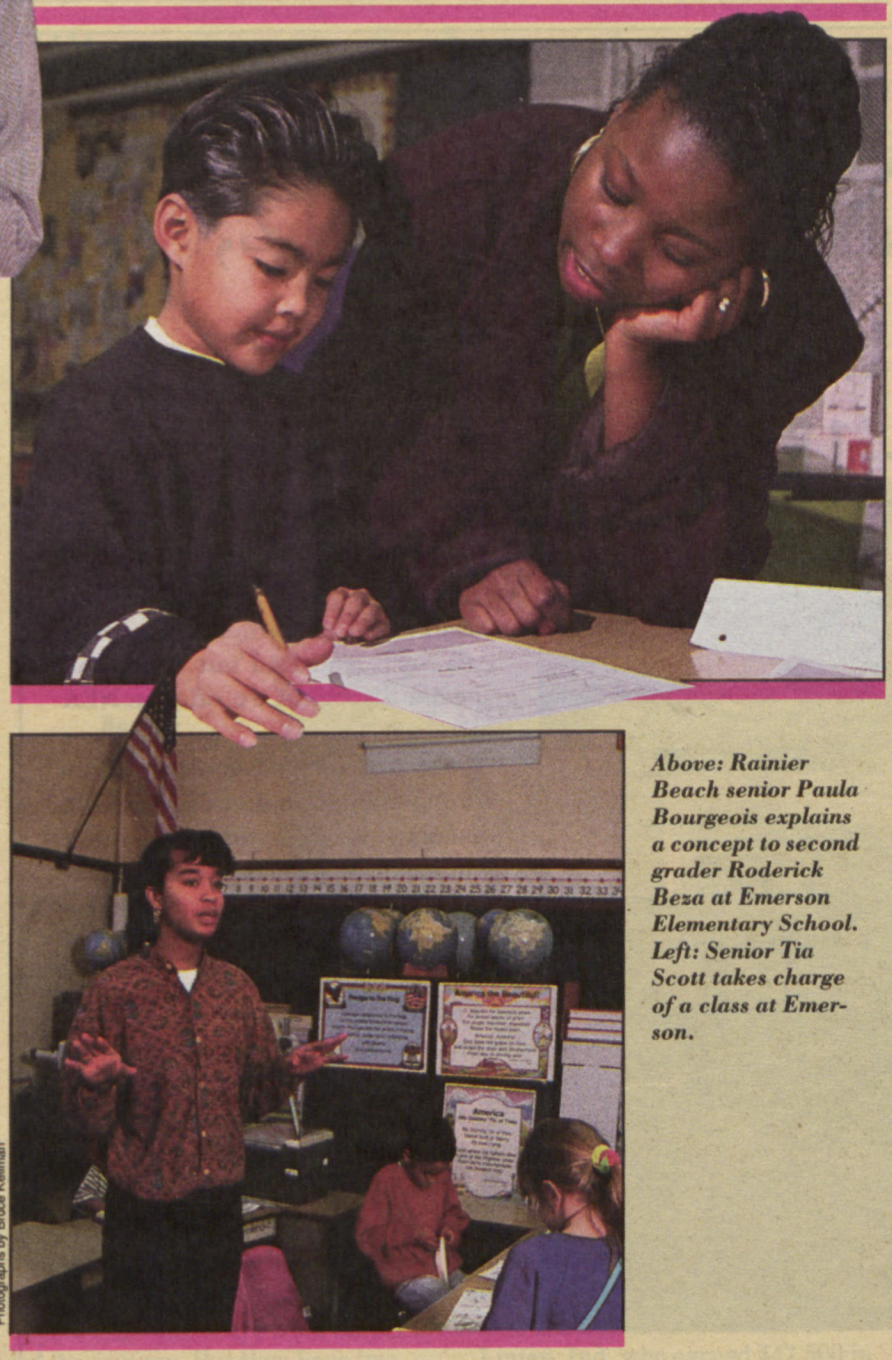
IN THE CLASSROOM

So You Want To Teach!

Everyone talks about how much we need to attract more minority students to the teaching profession. Here's what one high school is doing about it.

Teacher Kathi Lehr leads ninth graders in skits showing how teachers give kids positive and negative self-concepts.



Above: Rainier Beach senior Paula Bourgeois explains a concept to second grader Roderick Beza at Emerson Elementary School. Left: Senior Tia Scott takes charge of a class at Emerson.

Photographs by Bruce Kellman

"Teaching is like opening a Christmas present. You never know what's in a child's mind until you open it up."

That sounds like something a teacher might say, doesn't it? Actually, the observation comes from a teacher-to-be—17-year-old Shomari Shanks, a student in the Academy for the Teaching Professions magnet program at Rainier Beach High School in Seattle.

Shanks is one of 90 students enrolled in what's more commonly called the Teaching Academy. The program, now in its third year, trains high school students to be teachers by offering standard academic subjects along with preprofessional teaching classes and the practical experience of working with elementary students.

And, because the Academy is a partnership between the school, the University of Washington, and the Boeing Company, it can offer participants even more.

The University provides teacher and student training on computers donated by IBM and Apple. Boeing provides students with a mentor who is a racial minority—one of its software engineers—and the opportunity to earn money for college.

For each quarter that a student maintains a 3.0 average or better, Boeing banks $200 toward that student's future college tuition. By volunteering three hours a week as a tutor or teacher's assistant at a nearby elementary school, a kid earns another $200 per quarter.

Rainier Beach High's attendance area is 70 percent minority, and the Academy's population reflects this figure. Still, any student in the Seattle district is eligible for admittance.

Academy students and teachers actively recruit candidates. To be accepted, a student must have a good record—grades, attendance, and behavior; teacher recommendations; and acceptable performance in a personal interview.

The kids in the program take most of their classes together rather than with the school's other 700 students. Academy classes are usually small—about 20 students each—so there's lots of opportunity for active participation.

Another advantage: when classes are composed exclusively of Academy students, teachers can present each subject from a teaching perspective. In Ron Jensen's Great Thinkers of the World class, for example, each student selects a report topic. But instead of just researching and writing a paper, the student prepares and presents the subject as a teacher would to a class.

"The goal is to make the presentation lively and interesting—as a teacher would do," explains Jensen. "I encourage the kids to use lots of visuals, and I guide them through each step of the preparation. Afterward, we discuss each presentation."

"We treat teaching as if it's special—which it is," says Kathi Lehr, who teaches the Academy's preprofessional courses. In Lehr's freshman class, for example, kids explore such topics as teaching and learning styles, different ways of expressing themselves, current issues in education, how schools are changing, and what makes a good teacher.

To delve into these subjects, they reach beyond the classroom walls. Each student identifies and invites to class an appropriate guest speaker.

This year's guests included a police officer who talked about crime prevention, an elementary school principal who discussed his leadership role, and Reese Lindquist, president of the Seattle Education Association, who explained why teachers have a union and how SEA is helping to improve schools.

The class also visits other schools in and out of the community, and students start their practical classroom experience by mentoring elementary students and serving teacher apprenticeships.

Three nearby elementary schools welcome the kids into their classrooms. Academy students pair up one-on-one with the youngsters, walking them through the breakfast line, helping them learn their lessons with flash cards and games, and guiding them through their homework.

"It's a lot of fun," says ninth grader Aisha Cathcart. "The children don't want us to leave. They beg us to stay."

In Lehr's upper level class on teaching leadership—which also includes a lot of discussion and fieldwork—the students end each semester by actually presenting a lesson to primary students.

The lesson plans and materials come from Junior Achievement of Greater Puget Sound, which also provides a brief training program. Typical lesson subjects include decision making, business basics, and banking.

Lehr's upper level courses, incidentally, are open to all Rainier Beach High juniors or seniors.

The Teaching Academy program developed from a suggestion by a former principal. Rainier Beach High's steering committee—made up of faculty, parents, community members, and students—liked the idea.

To learn more, a team of teachers visited some of the other schools that offer high school teacher-training programs, including Crenshaw High School in Los Angeles and Austin High School in Houston.

The Teaching Academy—which began operation in 1989-90—incorporated some of those programs' features and many of the council's own ideas. The Academy is ever-evolving, but appears to be on the right track: In three years, only two percent of its students have left.

Not all Academy students intend to become teachers. Most are curious about the profession. Many have enjoyed being scout leaders or peer tutors and are exploring the teaching option.

Students aiming for other careers point out program features—like learning to communicate well and developing confidence in public speaking—that will be a plus in any profession.

Perhaps most important are Kathi Lehr's observations: "These kids are young and impressionable. As they work with younger children and experience the personal satisfaction of helping them learn and grow intellectually, who knows how many will decide to make teaching their career?

"But even if most go into other fields, society can't lose. These kids will better understand issues concerning education, schools, children, and learning. They'll be better parents—and they'll be ideal advocates for education."

—Diane Dismuke

RESOURCES

TV Tips

Afterschool Specials—*ABC-TV, alternate Thursdays, 4-5 p.m., ET.* March 5: "The Gift of Amazing Grace." *(photo right)* A teenager (actress Tempestt Bledsoe) in a family singing group realizes her true talent isn't singing. March 19: "The Mall: Freedom." First of a three-part series focusing on the lives of seven teenagers over the course of a summer.

Long Ago and Far Away—*PBS.* Saturday, March 7, 6:30-7 p.m. ET: "Frog and Toad Are Friends." Puppet animation brings five children's stories to life. Saturday, March 14, 6:30-7 p.m.: "Frog and Toad Together." Four more Frog and Toad stories, plus a behind-the-scenes look at how filmmaker John Mathews uses puppetry to bring these fictional characters to life.

ABC-TV

Schoolbreak Special: Fifty Simple Things Kids Can Do To Save the Earth—*CBS-TV, Tuesday, March 10, 4-5 p.m., ET.* Program host Levar Burton talks worldwide with children who are working to improve the earth's environment.

NOVA—*PBS, Tuesdays, 8-9 p.m. ET.* March 10: "Rescuing Baby Whales." As whale stranding becomes more common, scientists are learning how to cope with this mysterious behavior. March 17: "An Astronaut's View of the Earth." This documentary describes the making of a big-screen Imax/Omnimax film spectacle from aboard the space shuttle.

Assignment Discovery—*Discovery Channel; check local listings for times.* Friday, March 13: "Are Banks on the Brink? /Economics USA." Host Adam Smith recounts the history of banking and explains forces behind the law of supply and demand. March 17: "Keepers of the Forest." Wednesday, March 18: "In Celebration of Trees." Friday, March 20: "The Forest Through the Trees." Three specials on the vast variety of trees and their functions *(photo above).*

Image Bank

Weekend Specials*ABC-TV, Saturdays, 11:30 a.m.-12 noon, ET.* March 14 and 21: "Rag Tag Champs." Two-part series about a feisty 11-year-old captain of a Little League baseball team. March 28 and April 4: "Adventures of Con Sawyer & Huckemary Finn." Two-part contemporary story based on the novels of Mark Twain. Two best friends escape jewel thieves by sailing on the river raft.

Moyers/Families First—*PBS, Wednesday, March 25, 9-10:30 p.m. ET.* Host Bill Moyers reports on the 650,000 children living in foster homes, mental institutions, and detention centers—and on the street. Thesis: the American family's in a state of crisis. Also featured: a look at family preservation programs in 30 states.

Glenn Triest

Adventures in Wonderland—*Disney Channel, sometime in March. Check local listings for dates and times.* This new morning series for children teaches language and vocabulary skills through characters from *Alice in Wonderland.*

The Boys: A Tribute—*Disney Channel, sometime in March. Check local listings for dates and times.* Dom DeLuise hosts this 90-minute special about the humor of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, a computerized clearinghouse for children's TV and radio in Washington, D.C.

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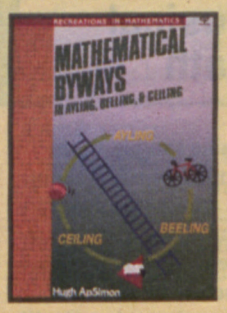
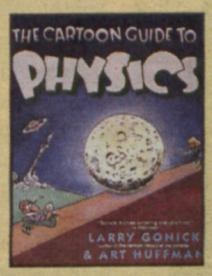
MATHEMATICS



Mathematical Byways in Ayling, Beeling, and Ceiling. Hugh ApSimon. In a fictional setting worthy of Agatha Christie, a collector of math puzzles sets out 16 of his most interesting examples. Oxford University Press (paperback). 98 pp. $7.95 from booksellers. Or charge to credit card (add $1.50 p&h) at 800/451-7556.

SCIENCE



The Cartoon Guide to Physics. Larry Gonick and Art Huffman. A wacky and scientifically accurate presentation of mechanics, electricity, and magnetism. Harper-Perennial. 214 pp. $10. From booksellers, or charge to credit card at 800/331-3761. Add $2.75 p&h plus your own state sales tax.

Vital Connections: Children, Science, and Books. Wendy Saul and Sybille A. Jagusch, editors. Papers from a symposium with the same title, including contributions from such children's science book authors as Jean Craighead George and Ira Flatow and the responses of teachers, librarians, and children's book editors. Library of Congress. 165 pp. $13. Write check to Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Or charge to credit card at 202/783-3238. Mention stock number 030-000-00227-0.

COUNSELING

Careers for Sports Nuts & Other Athletic Types. Wm. Ray Heitzmann. An ex-coach describes some of the occupations—such as athletic trainer, sports dentist, sportswriter—that can satisfy the sports fan's need to both make a living and stay close to the team. 134 pp. $8.95. From booksellers or prepaid (by check or credit card) from VGM Career Horizons, 4255 West Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood, IL 60646-1975, 800/323-4900, FAX 708/679-2494.

TRAVEL

U.S. and Worldwide Travel Accommodations Guide. Lists U.S. and European colleges and universities that rent dormitory rooms to the public, mostly in the summer, at rates as low as $12 to $24 a day. 1992 ed. 80 pp. $13 plus $1.50 first class p&h. Campus Travel Service, P.O. Box 8355, Newport Beach, CA 92660.

PEDAGOGY

Invitational Teaching, Learning, and Living. William Watson Purkey and Paula Helen Stanley. A book that has as its aim making classrooms "the most inviting place in town." 96 pp. $10.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. 800/229-4200, FAX 203/933-5276.

How To Help Beginning Teachers Succeed. Stephen P. Gordon. Describes an "induction team" approach to improving the odds for new teachers' success. 78 pp. Stock no. 611-91172. $6.95. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1250 N. Pitt St., Alexandria, VA 22314-1403, 703/549-9110.

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People

Through the Hands—From the Heart

Donna Bagby

Two Fort Worth, Texas, Association members—bus driver **A. B. Lampkin** and parapro **Dorothy Lampkin**—are immersed in a range of programs for the hearing-impaired and those close to them. Here's just a sample.

When the couple moved to Ft. Worth from Austin in 1967, they brought along a keen interest in signing. From the start, that interest produced results.

After the school district started a program for hearing-impaired students, Dorothy Lampkin was hired to teach sign language to the teachers. At church, A. B. Lampkin drives a bus for the hearing-impaired and signs the sermon, while Dorothy signs the hymns and announcements.

Dorothy also directs a monthly TV magazine show in sign. Both Lampkins played a part in setting up courses in sign at the local community college and the adult education center.

The Lampkins' strong commitment to serving the hearing-impaired—when no one in either of their families has a hearing impairment—may seem extraordinary to others, but not to them.

"It's just a field of volunteer work we chose to go into," A. B. Lampkin explains. "It's something that's needed, and it's rewarding."

Musical Math

A times table sung in three-quarter time, a musical about Maryland mathematician Benjamin Banneker, Chinese puzzles that teach form and function. These are the tricks of Maryland math teacher **Cyrilla Hergenhan's** trade.

"Today's tangrams are tomorrow's technology," says Hergenhan, who teaches fourth graders at Catonsville Elementary School. She's also one of 36 recipients of the American Teacher Awards presented by Disney last year.

Hergenhan says she teaches mathematics as a "performing artist would," mixing fun with the basics of geometry, mixing algebra with music, art, and literature. She develops some of her lessons as part of a team with researchers from Western Maryland College.

"I enjoy dressing up in costumes or teaching my students

Three NEA Members Vie for Title: 1992 National Teacher of The Year

Each year since 1952, state teachers of the year have vied for the honor of becoming the National Teacher of the Year. Next month one of four finalists—including the three NEA members at right—will be chosen 1992 National Teacher of the Year. The other finalist is Michigan teacher Thomas Fleming, a special education teacher from Ann Arbor.

The national competition is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. President Bush will honor the winner at a White House ceremony.

MARIA AZUCENA VIGIL

From Timid Parent To Confident Teacher

When **Maria Azucena Vigil** volunteered to be a bilingual aide in a Head Start classroom, she never dreamed that action would change her life.

Vigil, who grew up in Florida and California, had always been shy, with little self-confidence. But, says Vigil, that volunteer experience nearly 30 years ago made her feel a "needed and capable member of society for the first time." Until then, all her energies had been spent on her husband and seven children.

So in 1965, at age 30, Vigil decided to become a teacher. First came night classes at a community college, then a varied schedule at the University of California, Irvine. After getting her teaching certificate, Vigil went on to earn an MA in education from Pepperdine University.

Today, Vigil's a kindergarten teacher at Las Lomas Elementary in

Bob Riha, Jr.

La Habra, California. She chose working with five-year-olds, she says, because she came to realize how much children need a good foundation for learning.

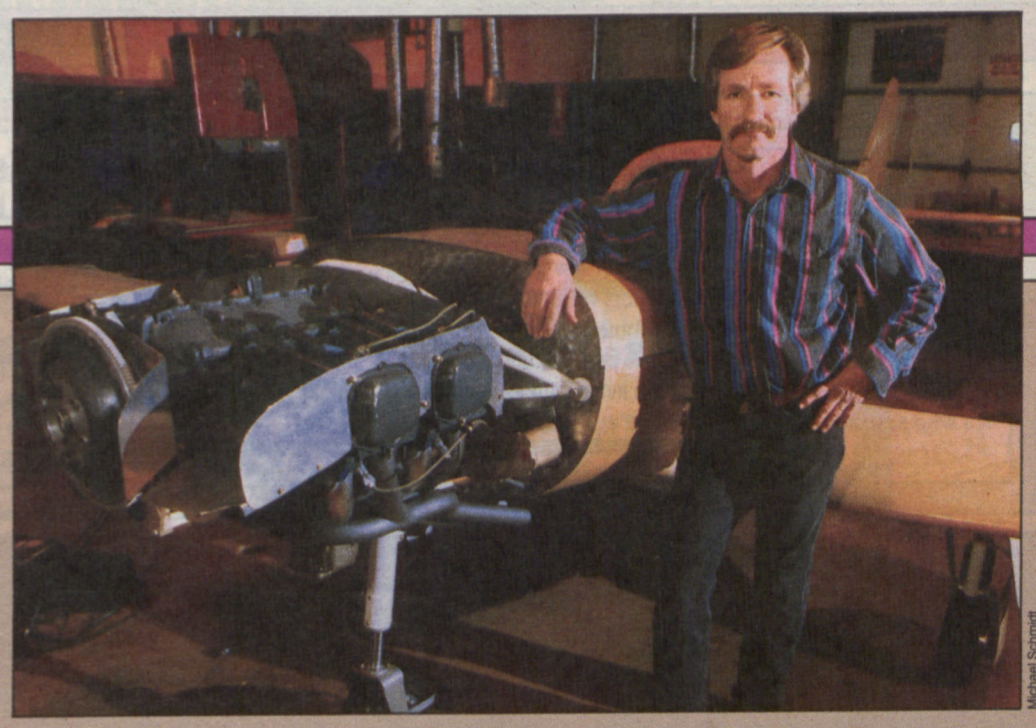
"I really enjoy children," says Vigil, California's 1992 Teacher of the Year. "They give us such hope for the future. In the classroom I get so much more than I give."

to sing their times tables to certain tunes,'' explains Hergenhan, who has spent years researching human brain development and individual learning styles.

Hergenhan's work in developing model math lessons has attracted national attention. Recently, the National Science Foundation awarded her college team $1 million to produce videos of their model lessons.

Hergenhan's Disney honors have gained her a celebrity admirer as well. Hummie Mann, who created the music for the recent movie *The Addams Family* and the television series *ALF*, has asked her to help create learning songs for school age children.

Richard Nowitz



Michael Schmidt

Quality is Job #1

The students in **Jim Jackson's** aviation technology classes build airplanes—real airplanes. Jackson flies them.

''You could say I bet my life on my kids,'' explains Jackson, veteran industrial education teacher at Mundelein High School in northern Illinois.

And you'd be right.

Once students finish building a plane, a confident Jackson flies the required 25 test hours before passing the plane on to its owner—the private ''sponsor'' who bankrolled the project and carried the necessary insurance.

This year's class is completing the third and final year's work on a two-seater (pictured here) that will fly 250 miles an hour and go 1,500 miles on one tank of gas.

Thanks to Jackson's initiative (and a little luck), next year's class will begin work on a plane specially designed to help scientists collect data on the effects of global warming in the area surrounding Alaska's Glacier Bay.

Eventually, the project—dubbed ''Alaska Bound''—will involve more than just aviation classes. With help from two state universities, private funders, and support from the school board, Jackson and other faculty members plan to integrate the research project into all disciplines at the school.

''Journalism students can write stories, history buffs can record the event, and foreign language students can translate.''

Aviation ''is my carrot in education,'' Jackson says. ''It turns kids on to learning.'' Alaska Bound will go one step further, he adds. ''It'll turn kids on to learning science.''

MARION LIPINSKI

Linking Creativity And Community

Joe Glick

When **Marion Lipinski** was in the sixth grade, her Irish immigrant mother began asking her to explain the words in the English language newspaper.

''My mother was not able to go far in school,'' explains Lipinski, Ohio's 1992 Teacher of the Year. ''So as I was growing up, she often told me never to stop learning or caring for others. Education, she said, would open our door to the world.''

Now teaching fifth graders at Center Street Village School in Mentor, Ohio, Marion Lipinski issues the same challenge to her students.

''We have the opportunity to learn in so many creative ways, whether it's dropping an egg from the second story to learn about physics or volunteering at a homeless shelter to understand the meaning of community,'' she says.

To create new learning opportunities, Lipinski's designing her own interdisciplinary teaching programs—one on the Civil War and the other a hands-on environmental impact study.

And outside the classroom, Lipinski leads by example—interpreting religious services for the hearing-impaired and volunteering at a home for battered women and children.

ROSA LUJAN

Power Source On the Rio Grande

Fernie Garcia

Rosa Lujan teaches at Ysleta Elementary, the same school she herself attended, in El Paso, Texas.

''I grew up on the farm where my father raises cotton,'' Lujan says. ''It's right next to the Rio Grande—'a toe away from Mexico,' we used to say.'' Her parents immigrated from Mexico.

Today Lujan is still close to the Rio Grande. She teaches a bilingual multigrade (4-6) class that helps children recently arrived from Mexico to make a smooth transition to middle school.

You can tell when you're nearing Lujan's classroom: paper suns spill from the doorway and blaze their way along the corridor walls, heading for the stairs.

''My class decided to read 2,700 books this year,'' Lujan explains. ''Each sun represents 10 books read. I asked them to estimate how far the suns would have to go by the time they reached their goal, and they figured to the principal's office.''

On the inside of Lujan's classroom door is a sign that reads in Spanish: ''I can, I will, I believe, it is done.''

''But I also tell the kids that it isn't enough simply to believe,'' Lujan points out. ''You have to be willing to pay the price to accomplish what you set out to do.''

DATA BANK

Fresh Attitudes

From an annual survey of over 200,000 freshmen, the proportion of first-year college students in America who say they:

Had a grade-point average of *A*	24%
Are politically conservative or far right	20
Are politically liberal or far left	26
Chose college for low tuition	28
Want mandatory AIDS testing	66
Want to promote racial understanding	34
Expect to take part in student protests	6
Have parents living with each other	71
Are interested in a teaching career	9

Source: American Council on Education, UCLA

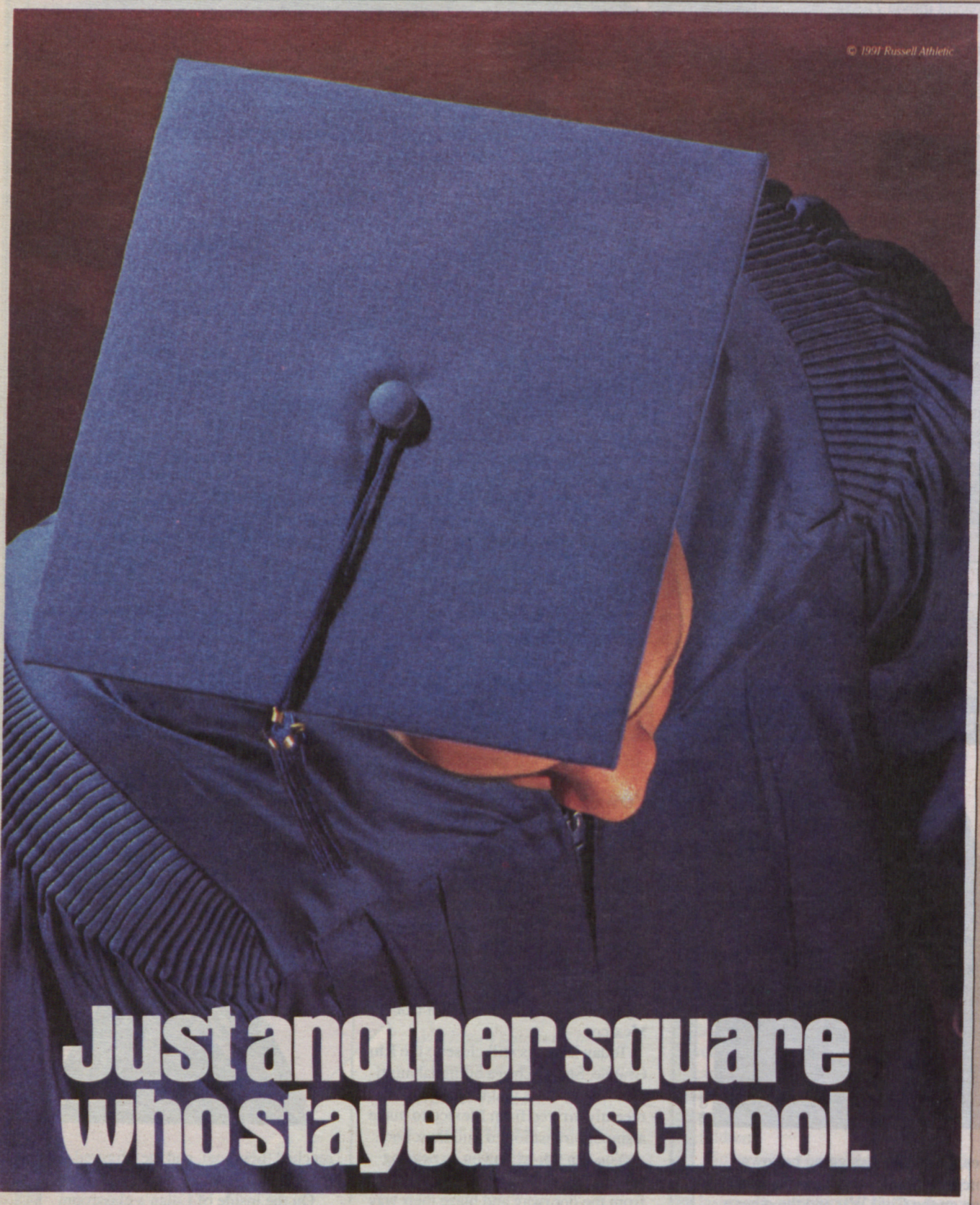
Statistical Debut

In a study billed as "the first comprehensive survey of educational theatre in this country in more than 20 years," theater teachers report these directing strategies.

Percent of theater teachers who say they've successfully:

Cast female in male role	64
Cast male in female role	20
Cast adult in major role	25
Cast physically handicapped students	35
Cast different races as members of one family	43
Cast more students by writing in characters	47
Deleted portions or scenes for inappropriate language/action	76

Source: The Educational Theatre Association



As America's best known athletic teamwear manufacturer, we know what it takes to be competitive. And we also know that no other uniform can compete with a cap and gown. So we're making posters like this ad available to coaches and teachers to help remind athletes what great shape an education can leave them in.

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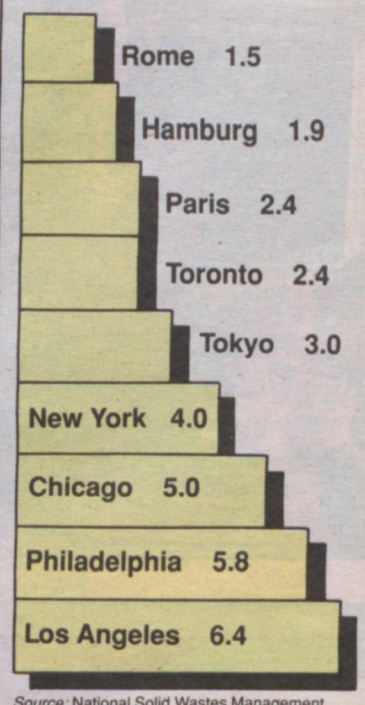
Garbage In...

When it comes to trash production, all cities are not equal.

Pounds of trash per person per day



Source: National Solid Wastes Management Association

Consumer Spending

Here's what the average consumer spent nearly $26,000 on in 1988.

Housing	$8,079
Transportation	5,093
Food	3,748
Other	3,426
Pensions/ Social Security	1,935
Clothing	1,489
Health Care	1,298
Life insurance	314
Alcohol	269
Tobacco	242
TOTAL:	$25,893

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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At Risk Students

At-Risk, Low-Achieving Students in the Classroom. Judy Brown Lehr and Hazel Wiggins Harris. Covers a huge variety of concerns, including grouping, organization and planning, teacher expectations, effective teaching, positive discipline, and collegial learning. 104pp. 1988. (3338-8-00-KN) $9.95

At-Risk Students and Thinking: Perspectives from Research. Barbara Z. Presseisen, Editor. Special attention is given to such areas as understanding the issues ... learning and assisted performance ... classifications versus instructional goals ... curriculum and instruction ... and teaching teachers to empower at-risk students. 160pp. 1988. (1483-9-00-KN) $14.95

Early Childhood At Risk: Actions and Advocacy for Young Children. Victoria Jean Dimidjian. Reviews the four cornerstones of growth in the early years and details directions for change in teacher intervention; encourages teacher advocacy on behalf of children. 64pp. 1989. (1481-2-00-KN) $8.95

Involving At-Risk Students in Learning. Judy Lehr and Hazel Wiggins Harris. Full color filmstrip with audiocassette narration and printed Guide. Approximately 10 min. 1989. (0240-7-00-KN) $37.50

Children of Alcoholics / Addicts. Richard L. Towers. This book investigates the impact it has on their learning, how to identify, what school staff can do to help, and where to go for outside help, materials, and resources. 80pp. 1989. (0242-3-00-KN) $9.95

Children of Divorce (with an in-service workshop). Susan R. Berger, Rohna A. Shoul, Susan Warschauer. A complete in-service workshop plan is included. 48pp. 1989. (0246-6-00-KN) $7.95

Homeless Students. Cynthia Crosson Tower and Donna J. White. Gives clear-cut suggestions on how the school can intervene with these students: in transition, with studies, with peers, and with self-concept. It also deals with the tough problems of what schools can do to help, outside the classroom. 48pp. 1989. (0245-8-00-KN) $7.95

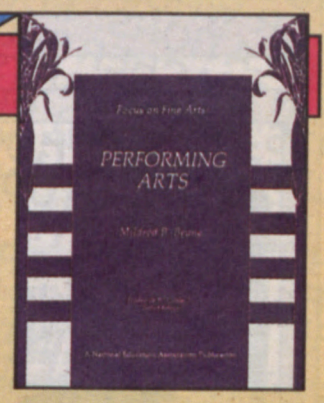
Nonachieving Students At Risk: School, Family, and Community Intervention. Harry W. Sartain. This research-oriented publication analyzes the frustration, depression, anger and attitudes, delinquency patterns, and dropout trends that put more than one-fourth of the students in our schools at risk. 64pp. 1989. (3074-5-00-KN) $7.95

Student Drug and Alcohol Abuse, How Schools Can Help Combat. Richard L. Towers. Symptoms, causes, and interventions are provided for all school staff. 224pp. 1987. (3291-8-00-KN) $12.95

Student Pregnancy, How Schools Can Help Combat. Nancy Compton, Mara Duncan, and Jack Hruska. Reviews student parents and their offspring, with interventions. 184pp. 1987. (3287-X-00-KN) $12.95

Student Suicide: A Guide for Intervention. John A. Vidal. Concentrates on those aspects where help is most needed, such as the role of the schools ... a crisis team approach ... a contingency plan ... mistakes to avoid ... and what teachers and other school staff can do, now. 56pp. 1989. (0244-X-00-KN) $7.95

Fine Arts



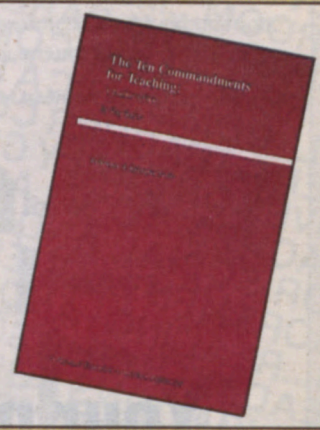
Fine Arts: Elementary Level. Miriam Kronish and Jeryl Abelmann. 56pp. 1989. (0301-2-00-KN) $8.95

Fine Arts: Humanities. Thomas Rooney. A complete case study is provided for starting a humanities course. 56pp. 1989. (0302-0-00-KN) $8.95

Fine Arts: Performing Arts. Mildred B. Beane. 88pp. 1989. (0303-9-00-KN) $10.95

Fine Arts: Visual Arts. Don L. Brigham. Includes actual lessons, activities, models, and examples. 80pp. 1989. (0304-7-00-KN) $9.95

Ten Commandments

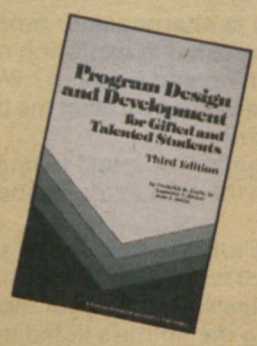


The Ten Commandments for Teaching: A Teacher's View. Ray Reyes. You will be overjoyed with these practical instructional techniques that will help you improve classroom control and student attitudes toward learning. You'll also appreciate the section devoted to improving your career-interwoven personal life. 64pp. 1991. (1539-8-00-KN) $8.95.

Gifted & Talented

Characteristics and Identification of Gifted and Talented Students. Third Edition. Frederick B. Tuttle, Jr. and Laurence A. Becker. This edition highlights problems of gifted students, multiple criteria for identification, use of standardized tests, and minority gifted. It also adds new information on right/left brain functions, the underachieving gifted, preschool education for the gifted, and gifted girls. 144pp. 1988. (0729-8-00-KN) $14.95

Program Design and Development for Gifted and Talented Students. Third Edition. Frederick B. Tuttle, Jr., Laurence A. Becker, and Joan A. Sousa. Provides a rationale for gifted programs, available program design, curricular models, successful teacher characteristics and attitudes, and program evaluation. The third edition features descriptions of newer programs, a concern for "pullout" programs, and the function of the coordinator of the gifted program. 160pp. 1988. (0727-1-00-KN) $12.95



Gifted and Talented Children: How Parents Can Help. Frederick B. Tuttle, Jr. A package of leaflets to help schools help parents with gifted and talented children. Pkg. of 25 leaflets. (0731-X-00-KN) $5.95

Gifted and Talented Students. Revised Edition. Frederick B. Tuttle, Jr. A concise, readable report that helps you review the research and provides a summary of issues in the field: characteristics, identification, program design, teacher selection, and evaluation. 32pp. 1983. (1045-0-10-KN) $3.95

Teaching the Gifted and Talented in the Elementary Classroom. Mary J. Heimberger. You will be excited by these G & T activities in reading/ language arts, social studies, math, science, and the entire curriculum. 80pp. 1980. (0735-2-00-KN) $9.95

Teaching the Gifted and Talented in the Middle School. Jill D. Wright. In addition to the individual content areas, you will receive expert help in interdisciplinary activities, counseling, problem solving, and teaching strategies. 64pp. 1983. (0745-X-00-KN) $9.95

Teaching the Gifted and Talented in the English Classroom. William W. West. Gives you a design for a lesson sequence, an example of a teaching sequence, suggestions for selecting unit themes, and activities to develop upper- level skills. 48pp. 1980. (0734-4-00-KN) $7.95

Teaching the Gifted and Talented in the Science Classroom. Second Edition. William D. Romey with Mary L. Hibert. Emphasizes the importance of a classroom environment that encourages students to try ideas even if they might fail, an attitude that fosters creative thinking. 64pp. 1987. (0748-4-00-KN) $8.95

Teaching the Gifted and Talented in the Social Studies Classroom. Paul D. Plowman. Suggestions for developing creativity and intelligence are used to provide challenging, meaningful, and appropriate learning opportunities. 56pp. 1980. (0737-9-00-KN) $6.95

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child Abuse and Neglect. Second Edition. Cynthia Crosson Tower. Helps school staff recognize, report, and deal with issues of child abuse and neglect, including long-term prevention. 224pp. 1987. (3295-0-00-KN) $12.95

Thinking Skills

Critical Thinking Skills. Marcia Heiman and Joshua Slomianko. Here is a systematic approach to understanding what thinking skills really are, identifying the kinds of problems students have in remembering, problem-solving and learning, and what you can do to improve critical thinking skills in your own classroom. 48pp. 1986. (1693-9-10-KN) $7.95

Measuring Thinking Skills in the Classroom. Revised Edition. Richard J. Stiggins, Evelyn Rubel, and Edys Quellmalz. Learn how teachers can measure basic thinking skills that students use to solve academic and life problems. 32pp. 1988. (0211-3-20-KN) $8.95

Teaching Thinking Skills: English/Language Arts. Beau Fly Jones, Margaret B. Tinzmann, Lawrence B. Friedman, and Beverly Butler Walker. Part One focuses on the language arts as thinking processes, organizational patterns, and strategic teaching and cognitive instruction. Part Two concentrates on content objectives and skills objectives. 104pp. 1987. (0204-0-00-KN) $9.95

Teaching Thinking Skills: Mathematics. Marcia Heiman, Ronald Narode, Joshua Slomianko, Jack Lochhead. The integrated approach includes sections on developing problem-solving skills; encouraging problem solving; identifying relevant data; thinking-improving strategies; visual-spatial skills; new technology and critical thinking. 48pp. 1987. (0203-2-00-KN) $7.95

Teaching Thinking Skills: Science. Ronald Narode, Marcia Heiman, Jack Lochhead, Joshua Slomianko. Special attention is given to pair problem solving; measuring the effects of student thinking abilities; visual-spatial abilities; concept mapping and the Venn Diagram; multiple representations; the SCIS/learning cycle; developing science skills in all grade levels, K-12. 48pp. 1987. (0202-4-00-KN) $7.95

Teaching Thinking Skills: Social Studies. Karen Rosenblum-Cale. After a quick—but comprehensive—review of the literature, the author focuses on a classroom environment that promotes thinking and gives details on the methodology involved. 48pp. 1987. (0205-9-00-KN) $7.95

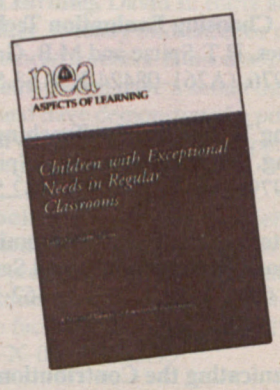
Thinking Skills Instruction: Concepts and Techniques. Marcia Heiman and Joshua Slomianko, Editors. A diversified collection of teaching suggestions, strategies, and activities to help both teachers and students. 312pp. 1987. (0201-6-00-KN) $16.95

Thinking Skills: Research and Practice. Barbara Z. Presseisen. Gives you practical day-to-day suggestions for learning strategies, the role of the teacher and the learner, curriculum, instruction, and assessment of thinking. 32pp. 1986. (1073-6-00-KN) $3.95

Thinking Skills: How Parents Can Help. Reproducible leaflet master. Marcia Heiman and Joshua Slomianko. Build parental and community support for your thinking skills program with this direct, easy-reading, motivating message you can reproduce in any quantity desired. 1987. (0210-5-00-KN) $3.00

Thinking with the Whole Brain: An Integrative Teaching/Learning Model (K-8). Jane Kita Cooke and Mildred Haipt. This four-step model uses oral reading, imaging, art activities, and a method for developing both visual and verbal skills. Samples lessons are included. 56pp. 1986. (1831-1-00-KN) $6.95

Exceptional Needs



Children with Exceptional Needs in Regular Classrooms. Libby G. Cohen, Editor. This book presents emerging trends and preferred practices for teaching exceptional students in regular classrooms, as well as the legal requirements governing their education. 184pp. 1992. (3009-5-00-KN) $11.95

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative Grouping for Interactive Learning: Students, Teachers, and Administrators. Lawrence Lyman and Harvey C. Foyle. You will find a unique plan for extending cooperative learning to all school forces through positive interaction and interdependence, rewards and accountability, instructional skills and supervision, restructuring without rebuilding, and planning meaningful change. 96pp. 1990. (1842-7-00-KN) $11.95

Cooperative Learning: Student Teams. Second Edition. Robert E. Slavin. You will receive six approaches to student teams and explicit examples so you can gain the benefits of cooperative learning immediately. 32pp. 1987. (1074-4-00-KN) $3.95

Cooperative and Student Team Learning. Robert E. Slavin, Consultant. Full color filmstrip with audiocassette narration. Concrete, specific teaching strategies and techniques are reviewed to enable students and teachers to work together through cooperative/student team learning approaches. Extremely valuable for workshop use. Includes a printed Script with Discussion Questions. 10 min. (1138-X-00-KN) $37.50

Student Team Learning: A Practical Guide to Cooperative Learning. Significantly Revised Third Edition. Robert E. Slavin. Use this newest look at cooperative learning to increase motivation and achievement in your classroom. Over 30 sample games, scoring sheets, and lesson plans are provided to help explain specific techniques that result in successful learning in the classroom. 128pp. 1991. (1845-1-00-KN) $18.95

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Behavior Modification. Second Edition. Robert J. Presbie and Paul L. Brown. 32pp. 1985. (1065-5-00-KN) $3.95

Classroom Discipline: Case Studies and Viewpoints. Sylvester Kohut, Jr. and Dale G. Range. Provides over 80 specific interventions to maximize classroom management and structure. 112pp. 1986. (1486-3-00-KN) $10.95

Classroom Group Management. Full color filmstrip with audiocassette narration and printed Guide. 8 min. 1974. (1111-2-10-KN) $37.50

Cooperation in the Classroom: Students and Teachers Together. James S. Cangelosi. Second Edition. A wide variety of practical—but often forgotten—aspects of cooperation are detailed ... including room arrangement, establishing rules, and cooperative planning. 80pp. 1990. (3072-9-00-KN) $9.95

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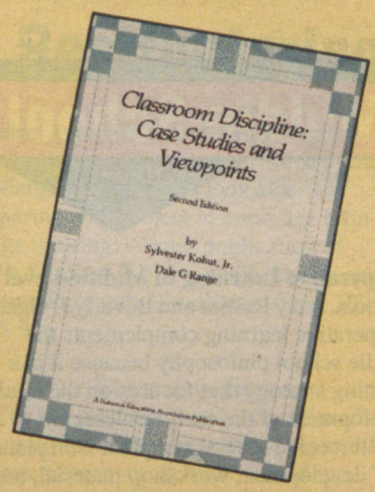
Discipline and Motivation: A Genuine Partnership. Audiocassette with printed Discussion Questions. Raymond J. Wlodkowski. Six specific approaches for your use in strengthening productive discipline through student self-motivation. 15 min. 1978. (1620-3-00-KN) $10.95

Discipline At Home. A reproducible leaflet master giving hints to parents on positive discipline techniques they can use at home. 1987. (0872-3-00-KN) $3.00



Discipline Techniques. Full color filmstrip with audiocassette narration and printed Guide. 9 min. 1976. (1124-4-10-KN) $37.50

Discipline: Toward Positive Student Behavior. Kevin J. Swick. A new perspective, research-based, looking at strategies for positive intervention through home/school strategies, relating to behavior problems in a developmental way, and positive responses. 32pp. 1991. (1091-4-00-KN) $3.95

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Publications of the Home Economics Education Association

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Choosing Techniques for Teaching and Learning. Second Edition. H.T. Spitze. 50pp. 1979. (A261-08402-KN) $2.50

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Positive Approaches to Classroom Discipline. B.B. Martin and J.I. Quilling. 30pp. 1981. (A261-08452-KN) $4.50

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Improving Spelling in the Middle Grades. Maryann Murphy Manning and Gary L. Manning. Includes more than 10 specific research-based instructional practices you won't find in the textbooks, over 12 alternatives to traditional spelling programs with sample forms, and 15 spelling activities. 48pp. 1986. (1695-5-00-KN) $7.95

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Learning Disabilities: Issues and Instructional Interventions. Clayton E. Keller and Daniel P. Hallahan. The authors focus on the causes and prevalence of learning disabilities, identification and charcteristics of the learning- disabled student, administrative arrangements, approaches, mainstreaming, and instructional interventions. 32pp. 1987. (1076-0-00-KN) $3.95

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Self-Concept, Developing Positive Student. Second Edition. David L. Silvernail. This book is based on more than 185 sources cited to develop ideas on what happens to young people in the school environment, and what teachers can do to enhance their students' feelings about themselves. 64pp. 1985. (1692-0-00-KN) $8.95

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Teacher Evaluation: Five Keys to Growth. Daniel L. Duke and Richard J. Stiggins. Concentrates on five key aspects of evaluation from both the teacher's point of view and the evaluator's perspective, with close attention given to the attributes of the data gathered, the attributes of the evaluation context, and a teacher evaluation experience questionnaire. 48pp. 1986. (1536-3-00-KN) $6.95

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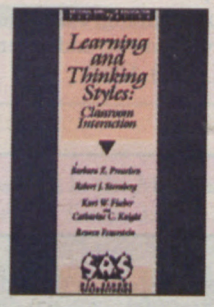

Children of Promise: Literate Activity in Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Classrooms. Shirley Brice Heath and Leslie Mangiola. A how-to look at a school-university partnership project in cross-age bilingual whole langauge tutoring. A joint publication of NEA, Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy, and American Educational Research Association. 64pp. 1991. 1844-3-00-KN) $8.95

Cornerstones for a New Century. Ernest L. Boyer. The author offers a far-reaching, practical agenda for progress. The key issues he focuses on are teacher preparation, early childhood education, and a national education index of objectives and assessment of how states are meeting those objectives. A *must read*. 48pp. 1992. (1846-X-00-KN) $7.95

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Learning and Thinking Styles: Classroom Interaction. Barbara Z. Presseisen, Robert J. Sternberg, Kurt W. Fischer and Catherine C. Knight, and Reuven Feuerstein. This significant, timely publication provides fresh insights and research on intellectual styles, cognitive development, and structural modifiability. 160pp. 1990. (1841-9-00-KN) $15.95

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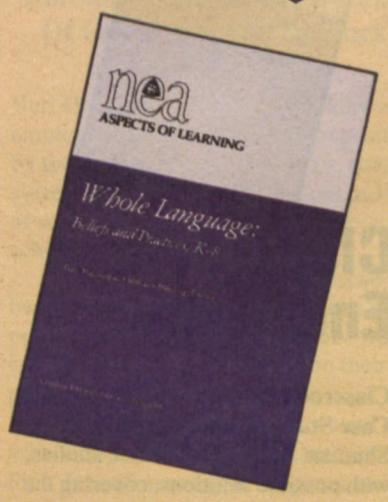
Whole Language



Reading and Writing in the Primary Grades, (Whole-Language). Maryann Murphy Manning, Gary L. Manning, Roberta Long, and Bernice J. Wolfson. Special attention is given to a model of literacy learning, the role of teachers in creating sound literacy programs for their students, and explicit examples of instructional practices that support the rational literacy development of young children (whole language approach). 80pp. 1987. (1697-1-00-KN) $9.95

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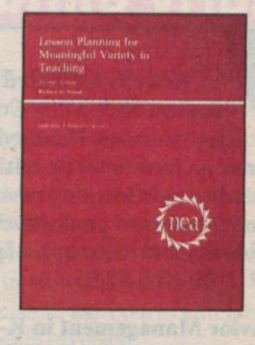

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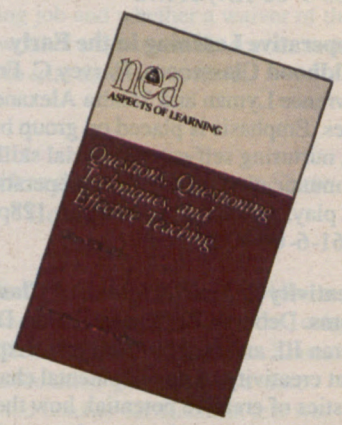

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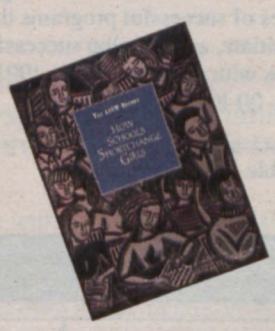

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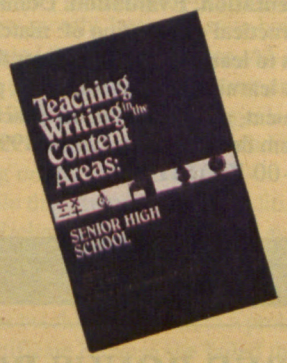

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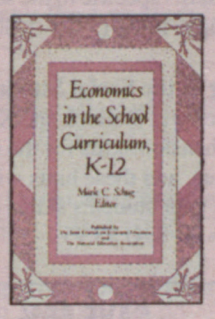

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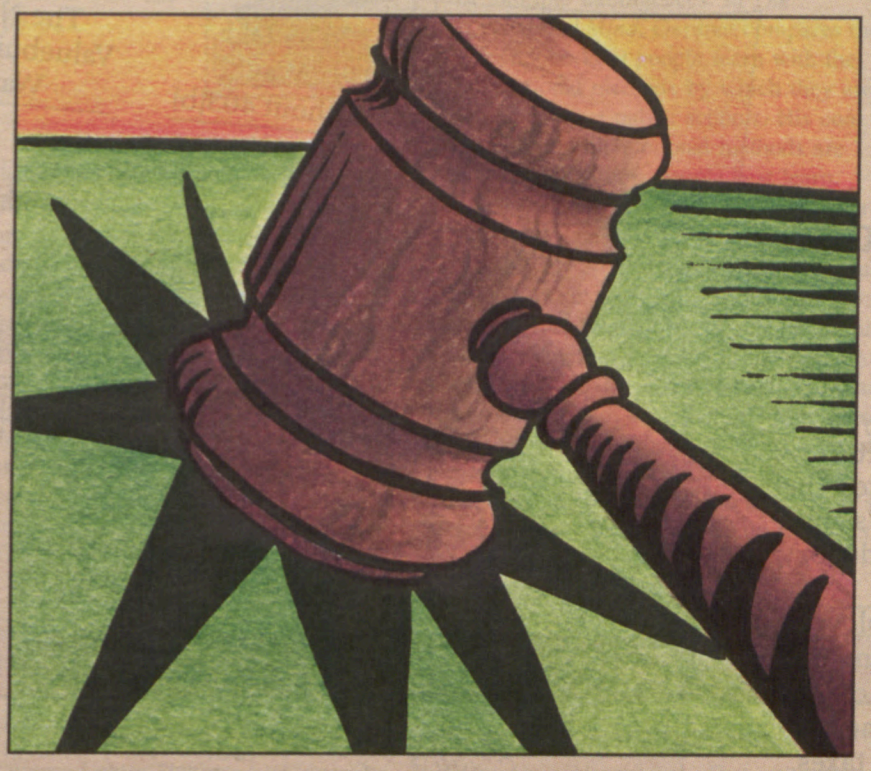
LEGAL TIMES

WITH NEA HELP

Members Post Legal Victories

NEA's Kate Frank/Dushane Fund helps pay legal costs when members go to court. With the Fund's help, several NEA members have recently won substantial victories. Their cases have helped maintain, and sometimes expand, the job rights of public school employees. Some highlights.



Hanshaw v. Board of Education Of Carter County, Kentucky (6th Cir. 1991).

Burl Hanshaw and four co-workers were employed in educational support positions by the Carter County, Kentucky, school system when they made the fatal mistake of supporting the losing candidates in a school board election.

At contract renewal time, the school board rejected the superintendent's recommendation, terminated the five workers, and hired new employees in their place.

Hanshaw and the four others sued the school board, claiming a violation of their First Amendment rights of speech and association. Members of the board asked that the case be thrown out of court, claiming "qualified immunity."

Under this doctrine, school officials can't be sued for money damages unless the law was "clearly established," at the time that their actions violated the U.S. Constitution. When the district court denied their motion, the board members appealed.

In a decision reaffirming the First Amendment rights of public school employees, the federal Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals held that the board members were not entitled to immunity because the law prevents public employees from being fired for their political views and activities. The case has been remanded for trial.

Texas Faculty Association v. University of Texas at Dallas (5th Cir. 1991).

In this important higher ed decision, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals recognized that tenured faculty are entitled to due process even if they're laid off because of the elimination of an academic program.

After a two-year study that included faculty input, the administration of the University of Texas at Dallas decided to eliminate two academic programs and to lay off the 10 tenured faculty members who taught in them.

When the affected faculty demanded a formal due process hearing to contest the proposed changes, the University president responded by offering only the opportunity for an informal chat. Dissatisfied, the faculty sued in federal court.

The trial court dismissed the case, holding that the president's informal offer was all the process that was due. The court reasoned that the faculty members were entitled only to minimal due process because the layoff decision was based on "impersonal factors" rather than a charge of misconduct or some other "good cause."

In what it called a "case of first impression," the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed. Because they were tenured to the University and not merely to their specific academic programs, the court said, the 10 faculty members were entitled to a "meaningful opportunity" to show that they should be retained to teach in some other field for which they were qualified. The court ruled that the president's offer was inadequate.

Unfortunately, however, the court of appeals also held that the faculty members were afforded adequate due process with regard to the decision to eliminate the two academic programs. Faculty were consulted throughout the two-year study process, the court ruled, and given the opportunity to voice their views.

Pandazides v. Virginia Board Of Education (4th Cir. 1991).

The issue in this case was whether the Virginia Board of Education can require all candidates for a teaching license to pass the National Teacher Examination (NTE). In a significant victory for persons with disabilities, the Fourth Circuit said "not necessarily."

Sofia Pandazides had been diagnosed as suffering from several learning disabilities that impaired her ability to read quickly and to recall a specific word or phrase. Over the years she developed compensatory mechanisms that enabled her to do well in school, but she still had great difficulty passing certain types of written tests.

After graduation from college, Pandazides obtained a probationary certificate and began teaching disabled middle school students. She taught for two years and got good evaluations.

During this time she also took the NTE, a requirement in Virginia for permanent licensure. She passed the entire test except the Communications Skills section, a two-hour, paper-and-pencil test that's supposed to determine whether teachers can communicate with kids. She retook the section several times, but continued to fail.

A clinical psychologist and educational testing expert who examined Pandazides concluded that her learning disabilities didn't impair her ability to communicate with students but did impair her ability to perform well on exams like the Communications Skills test.

Armed with this opinion, Pandazides' attorney asked the Virginia Board of Education either to waive the NTE requirement in this case or to use some other means of assessment, such as classroom observation, to evaluate her. The state board refused.

Since she didn't have a permanent certificate, Pandazides lost her job—despite her good evaluations and despite the fact that the local school administration wanted to rehire her.

Pandazides then sued the state board in federal court, claiming that she had been discriminated against because of her disabilities. Under federal law, recipients of federal funds may be required to make changes in their programs to accommodate persons with disabilities.

The district court dismissed the case, holding that Pandazides' failure of the NTE was conclusive proof that she was not qualified to be a teacher. In an important decision, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed.

The court held that Pandazides' failure of the NTE didn't prove that she lacked qualifications to teach. The case was sent back to the lower court to decide whether, despite failing the NTE, Pandazides can perform the "essential functions" of a teaching job and whether a waiver of the NTE would be a reasonable accommodation. No trial date has been set.

Richardson v. Alabama State Board of Education (11th Cir. 1991).

In a class action lawsuit (called *Allen v. Alabama State Board of Education*) originally filed in 1981, the Alabama Education Association charged that a state-mandated teacher certification test was racially discriminatory and violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

In 1985, the state board of education agreed to a consent decree stopping the use of the test and requiring the board to issue teaching certificates to certain teachers who had failed the test.

A few months later, the state board repudiated the consent decree. AEA hauled the board back into court and, in April 1987, won a court of appeals decision that the decree was valid and binding on the state board.

While this lawsuit was being litigated, Alice Richardson was employed as a fifth and sixth grade reading teacher by the Lamar County, Alabama, school system. She was teaching pursuant to a probationary certificate because she failed the teacher certification test several times.

Her local school board didn't renew her contract at the end of the 1985-86 school year because she lacked a permanent certificate. She sued, claiming that the test was racially discriminatory and that her discharge for failure to pass the test violated Title VII.

The local board claimed that it was forced to dismiss Richardson under Alabama law because she did not have a permanent certificate. The court rejected the argument—noting that the state's certification requirement had been invalidated and was on appeal and emphasizing that the local board could have requested the state to issue another temporary teaching certificate.

The court then ordered Richardson reinstated with tenure, awarded her over $11,000 in back pay and benefits and over $37,000 in attorneys' fees. The school board appealed, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit affirmed. A request by NEA attorneys for an additional $30,000 fee award for the appeal is now pending.

—Mike Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

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BOOK BEAT

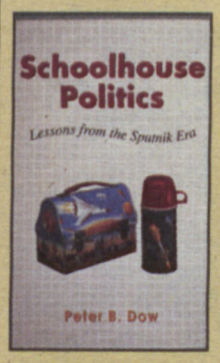
Will Dewey Have the Last Laugh?

Three heavyweights in the school reform movement are out with new books that strike familiar themes.

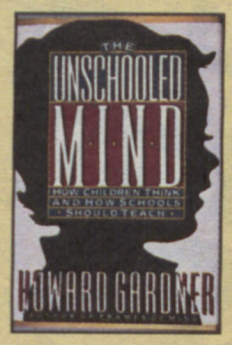
Columbia University historian Ellen Condliffe Lagemann says that "one cannot understand the history of education in the United States during the twentieth century unless one realizes that Edward L. Thorndike won and John Dewey lost."

But new books from authors Peter B. Dow, Howard Gardner, and Theodore R. Sizer suggest that while Thorndike may have won the battle, Dewey has a good chance of winning the war.

Dewey's progressive philosophy was in vogue from approximately 1890 to 1920. His basic tenets were that students learn best when they are doing relevant tasks and that schools should be organized around the ways students learn. Thorndike, whose views have dominated education from the 1920s until today, believed that public schooling should be standardized and hierarchically managed.



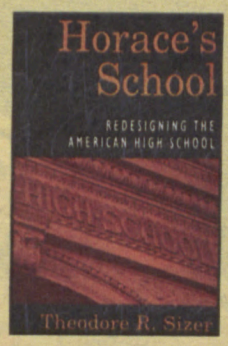
Schoolhouse Politics: Lessons from the Sputnik Era.
By Peter B. Dow
Harvard. 300 pp. $34.95.



The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach
By Howard Gardner
Basic Books. 303 pp. $23.

All three new books advocate restructuring public education according to Dewey's progressive philosophies. The only question for the authors: is this change politically achievable?

In *Schoolhouse Politics,* Peter B. Dow recounts the development, implementation, and demise of the "hands-on" anthropology curriculum called Man: A Course of Study (MACOS), developed by a group of university scholars during the 1960s. The experimental curriculum strove to teach students and classroom teachers to think like social scientists. Conservative political forces eventually crushed the experiment, leading Dow, its director, to conclude that every educational decision is a political decision.



Horace's School: Redesigning the American High School
By Theodore R. Sizer
Houghton Mifflin. 238 pp. $19.95.

Howard Gardner is a world-class cognitive scientist, best known for his theory of multiple intelligences. In *The Unschooled Mind,* Gardner compares the research on how people learn with the instructional methods by which they are taught in most public schools. His conclusion: the instructional methods are antithetical to how people best learn.

Gardner believes that "genuine understanding" can only occur when students are actively engaged in doing meaningful tasks. Consequently, he proposes that we scrap our current forms of schooling and begin educating students through apprenticeships in learning environments similar to today's hands-on children's museums.

The school restructuring adventures of fictional English teacher Horace Smith continue in *Horace's School,* Ted Sizer's sequel to the highly acclaimed *Horace's Compromise. Horace's School* is a fictional description of the nonfictional challenges today's high school teachers face as they try to change the structure and character of their schools. While Sizer's essential ideals have not changed since the publication of *Horace's Compromise,* seven years of trying to restructure high schools have clearly taken their toll.

Much of the optimism Sizer exhibited in *Horace's Compromise* is gone. Sizer's last chapter, "Will Horace Get His School?," is brutally realistic and somewhat discouraging.

Yet if you take the three books together, in the order I read and discussed them, there's hope. It comes from noticing that the three agree that progressive, student-centered, John Dewey-style education is what children need. Perhaps a political consensus can be built around "progressive education." If so, that would be very good news for public school students and teachers, because it would mean the country would only be arguing over how to do the job, not what job to do.

—Doug Tuthill

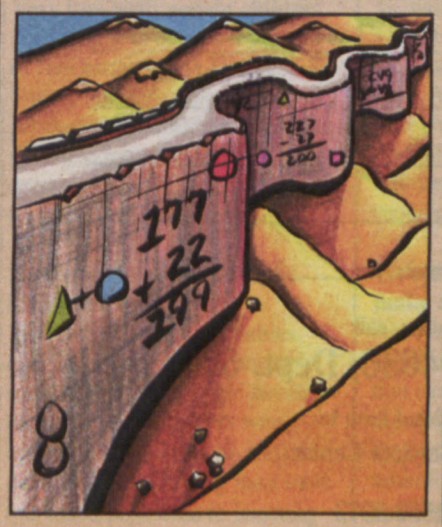
Tuthill is a philosophy teacher at St. Petersburg (Florida) High School. He's currently president of the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association, which is heavily involved in school restructuring.

TRENDS

Resourceful Reckoners

Teachers bent on improving youngsters' mathematics skills should study the way Chinese kids learn. In tests given to Chinese and U.S. first graders, Chinese kids outperformed U.S kids by a three-to-one ratio. The reason? Simple, say researchers: early on, Chinese kids learn more than one way to solve a problem.

Chinese youngsters used more sophisticated methods earlier, remembered more facts, and did a better job of breaking problems down to their component parts, says research psychologist David Geary of the University of Missouri. He ran the study in collaboration with Liu Fan, Chinese Central Institute for Education Sciences in Beijing.



Wonder whether you're giving enough homework? Check against the Chinese: an average 40 to 80 minutes of homework a day in first grade.

Practice Makes Fluent

When it comes to verbalizing, preschool children from single-parent homes have better skills than kids of two-parent homes, according to recent research.

What makes kids with single moms and dads more communicative? They get to talk with their parents more, according to a 1989-90 study combining a parent survey with speech and language screening of 311 preschool children. Altogether, 44 percent of the married couples' children were referred for further speech and language testing compared with 25 percent of the single parents' children.

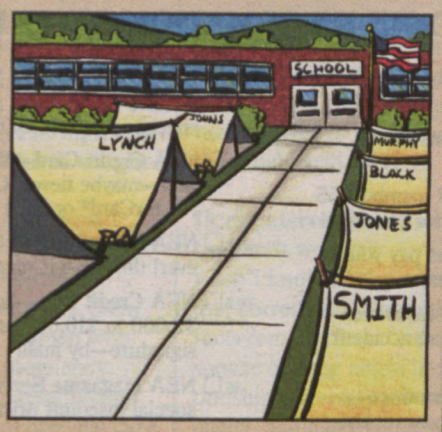
Kids begin developing their communication skills at around 18 months, experts say.

Black and White

Black working women's earnings have nearly caught up with white women's. A new Census Bureau report notes that the 1989 median earnings of Black women working full-time, year-round are $17,389—92 percent of the $18,922 earned by white women. That ratio represents considerable gains since 1969, when Black women earned only 79 percent as much as white women.

These dramatic gains largely result from a shift in Black women's occupations. In the 1950s, over half of all Black women worked as domestics, compared to 3 percent today.

Parents Camp Out



Arlington, Virginia, parents spent a three-day weekend this winter camping out—with or without tents—outside H-B Woodlawn School. It wasn't for love of fresh air. At stake were 70 slots—first-come, first-served—in Woodlawn's well-reputed alternative program.

Some of the school's attractions: Just 500 kids in grades 6-12, small class sizes, a cornucopia of courses, and flexible teaching methods. Parents of Woodlawn students also note the school's emphasis on the humanities.

Some Washington area alternative schools have resorted to admission by lottery so parents won't have to camp out.

Rich Kids, Poor Kids

If kids benefit from going to school with others from different backgrounds, why limit integration to those of different races? Why, indeed, say administrators in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, who've redrawn attendance boundaries to better integrate poor kids into the system's nine elementary schools.

La Crosse schools' socioeconomic segregation is substantial, say LaCrosse educators. In some elementary schools, 70 percent or more of the students are enrolled in the subsidized lunch program; in others, it's only about 4 percent. New guidelines mandate that in no school will below 20 percent or above 45 percent of the students be eligible for free lunch.

The La Crosse initiative is believed to be the first move to use pupil assignment to increase socioeconomic diversity in schools.

La Crosse's 7,800 students are 87 percent white, 13 percent minority (predominantly Asians).

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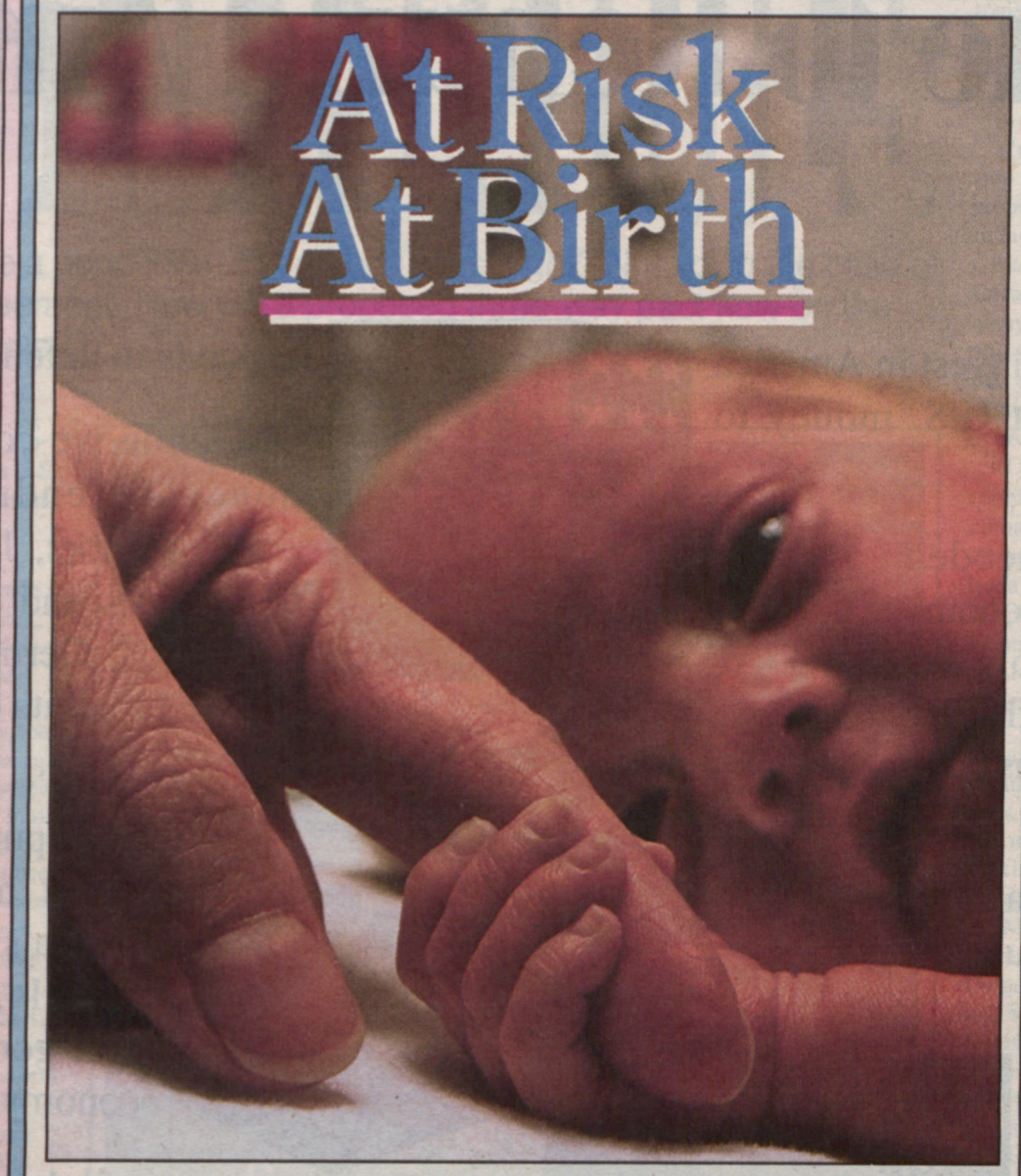
TFA032

Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn.

Gerald B. Merenstein, M.D., is professor of pediatrics and director of the Lubchenco Perinatal Centers at the University of Colorado School of Medicine/ Children's Hospital. Chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee on the Fetus and Newborn, Dr. Merenstein is also a member of the March of Dimes Committee for Perinatal Health.



How do you define low birth weight?
Low birth weight is defined in two ways. Before 1968, the term referred to babies born prematurely and under 2,500 grams or 5.5 pounds. Now the term includes full-term babies under 5.5 pounds as well.

What are the causes of low birth weight?
Unfortunately, the principal cause is prematurity. We know that mothers who don't have adequate prenatal care have higher incidences of premature births.

There also appears to be association between a mother's use of drugs —particularly cocaine—and premature birth.

Babies whose mothers smoked crack during pregnancy often have severe injuries to their systems. The use of cocaine by a pregnant woman can cause the blood vessels in the placenta to constrict, diminishing oxygen supply to the fetus. This can result in physical malformations as well as damage to the baby's central nervous system.

A mother's tobacco smoking is associated with increased risk of low birth weight but not premature birth.

How big a problem are we talking about here?
Very low birth weight children comprise less than two percent of live births in the United States, but they represent a large proportion of children requiring special education services or extra years in school, and their numbers are increasing.

How does low birth weight affect learning?
Very small premature babies may have very strong impairment of their neurologic development. But even infants who appear to be normal on initial developmental testing may have increased problems in learning by the time they reach school.

According to statistics, 15 to 20 percent of infants who require neonatal care will have significant measurable developmental or physical disability. By the time they reach school, a much larger percentage will have learning disabilities.

Some studies have shown that as many as 50 to 66 percent of very low birth weight infants require special education services. According to a recent Cornell University study evaluating 88 children, 48 percent of the children born prematurely required special education.

Would early intervention make a difference?
Absolutely. A recent study from Stanford University suggests that early intervention both in the nursery and after discharge from the hospital will improve the neurological development of low birth weight babies.

And early screening and diagnosis of hearing, vision, and speech problems, anemia, and other health problems that affect learning are vitally important. Treating learning disabilities when children enter school is too late.

Are some mothers at high risk of delivering low birth weight babies?
Yes. These babies are most likely to be born to mothers of lower socioeconomic backgrounds, unwed mothers, teenage mothers, and women who use drugs during pregnancy.

There's a direct relationship between the lack of prenatal care available and the high incidence of babies born underweight. Too often, mothers with inadequate health insurance or no health insurance coverage at all get no prenatal care.

Other women delay prenatal care until it's too late to make the nutritional changes or receive treatments that might prevent premature or low birth weight births.

Something must be done, because the United States has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the West—and low birth weight is considered a major factor in the failure of these babies to survive.

Does paternal behavior affect the birth weight?
I don't know of any research on that correlation, although two facts remain clear. Certainly spouse or drug abuse in a relationship adversely affects pregnancy, and paternal support of the mother is more likely to result in her receiving prenatal care.

What is the Academy doing to address this issue?
On the policy end, we support a major initiative providing access to care, particularly for mothers and children. We're working with congressional leaders and other groups on legislation to that end.

This work is critical because more and more children are at risk. Every day in the United States, according to the Children's Defense Fund, 2,685 babies are born into poverty, 638 are born to mothers who receive little or no prenatal care, and 742 are born with low birth weight.

Second, the Academy worked closely with the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (AGOC) to revise the guidelines for perinatal care.

Third, AAP has sponsored—with the ACOG and the March of Dimes—a committee on perinatal health since the 1970s.

The committee includes pediatricians, obstetricians, nurses, public health experts, government officials, consumers, and insurance representatives. The committee's current aim is to improve the outcome of pregnancy in the '90s.

What can education employees do to help reduce the scope of this problem?
Educators have a key role in ensuring that there's good health education from kindergarten through high school. We still have a million teenage pregnancies a year, and it's important that children understand the need for quality health care and planning for pregnancies.

That education is critical because in many cases it's a lack of education about the importance of prenatal care that leads to low weight births and infant mortality.

Resources

► The American Academy of Pediatrics offers two brochures, *Learning Disabilities and Children: What Parents Need To Know*, and *Developmental Milestones*, a chart of a child's developmental indicators.

To order, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to American Academy of Pediatrics, Attn: Communications, 141 N.W. Point Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL 60007.

► The Children's Defense Fund has published *The Health of America's Children*. To order, send a check or money order for $4.50 (add $2 for state/city data appendix) to the Children's Defense Fund, 122 C St. N.W., Washington, DC 20001, attn: Publications.

1992

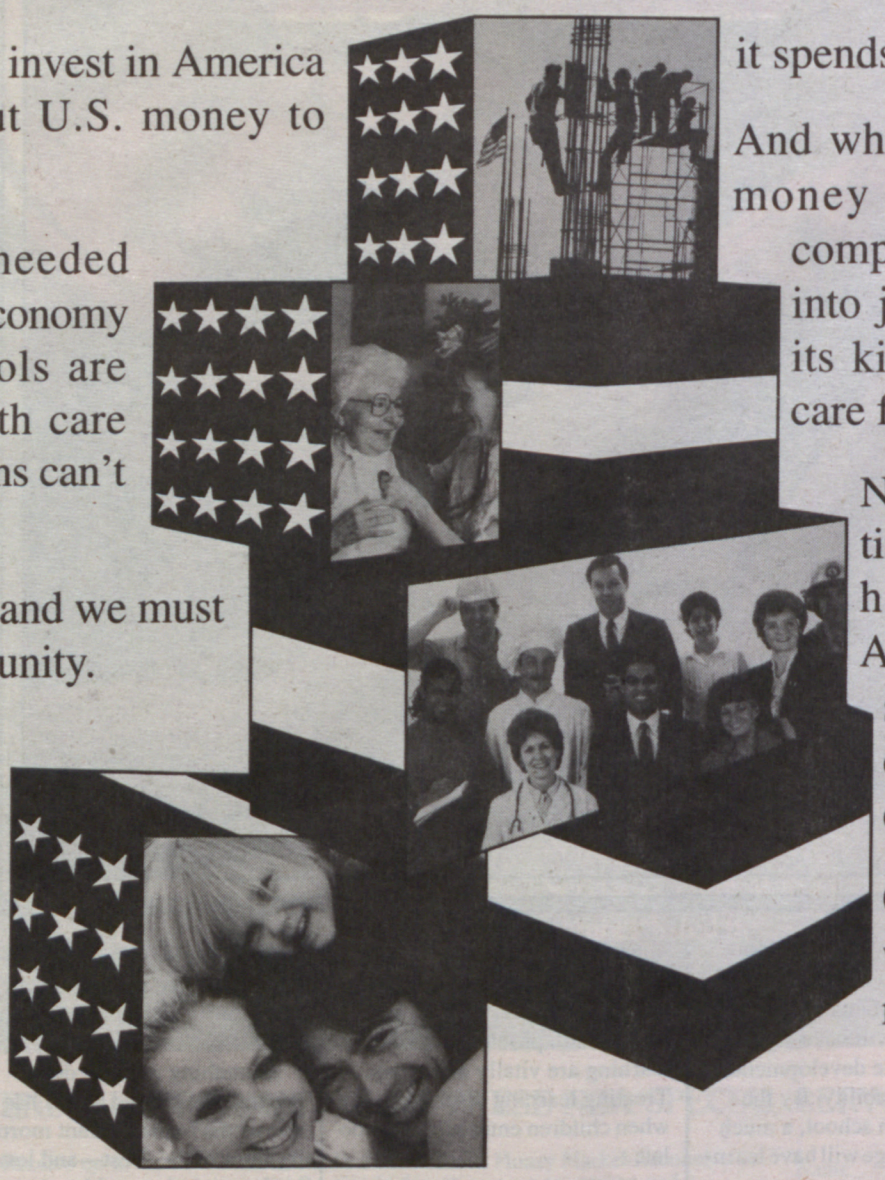
It's Time to Rebuild America

1992 can be the year we invest in America again, the year we put U.S. money to work for Americans.

And never have we needed investment more. Our economy is faltering; our schools are falling short; and health care costs so much, Americans can't afford to get sick.

The world has changed and we must seize this unique opportunity.

Right now, we're spending billions of dollars defending Japan and Germany. In fact, we spend more to defend Germany than it spends to defend itself.



And while we continue to spend our money defending our economic competitors, Japan puts its money into jobs and quality education for its kids; Germany pays for health care for all its citizens.

Now, it's America's turn. It's time to put that money to work here at home, for us. It's America's turn to have quality schools, affordable health care, good jobs and a strong economy.

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INTERNATIONAL

OPEN BORDERS CLOSED FUTURES

Free trade sounds like a good idea. Everybody wins, right? Not so, in the case of the U.S.-Canada agreement. How will a proposed three-way pact now on the table affect U.S. schools?

The "free trade" agreement now being negotiated among the U.S., Canadian, and Mexican governments may seem remote from your school and neighborhood.

It's not. The adoption of a free trade agreement that links the United States, Canada, and Mexico could have a devastating impact on your community and your schools.

That's the opinion of Canadian school employees, who speak from experience. In 1989, a free trade agreement between Canada and the United States went into effect, and Canadian schools and school employees have been hurting ever since.

In the three years since import barriers between Canada and the United States began to tumble, companies producing for the Canadian market have begun shifting operations to the United States, where unions are weaker, pay lower, and safety and environmental regulations less exacting. Since the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement took effect three years ago, Canada, with a population of 27 million, has lost 430,000 manufacturing jobs—more than 1 in 5.

Businesses that stay in Canada can't compete with the cheap costs of producing in the United States and are going broke, throwing their employees, too, into the unemployment lines.

The impact on schools is predictable. As unemployment rises, more students come to school anxious, depressed, even hungry or homeless. Rising unemployment also lowers tax receipts, both from workers income and from factory and business revenue. The shortfalls take their toll on school budgets.

Other issues are more subtle. U.S. publishers no longer need maintain Canadian operations to sell to the Canadian market. As publishing operations move south, Canadian teachers envision textbooks referring to "our government in Washington."

The three-way free trade agreement now advocated by the Bush Administration would likely put jobs in the United States under the same pressures the Canada-U.S. agreement placed on Canadian jobs. With no trade barriers between the United States and Mexico, U.S. companies would quickly shift more and more operations to Mexico.

Will open borders with the U.S. make this Mexican classroom more like ours? If experience so far is any guide, it'll work the other way around.

To some extent, this exodus of U.S. jobs has already begun. In 1982 Mexico opened up free trade zones along its U.S. border, and U.S. plants have been heading south ever since. The motive is clear. While paying Mexican workers $20-$40 a week, a corporation gets away from U.S. environmental, health, and safety regulations.

The free trade zones haven't helped Mexican workers. They've seen the buying power of their minimum wage fall from $7 to $4 a day since 1982. Their new U.S. employers pressure them by threatening to move on to even cheaper Asian labor. Faced with the prospect of a free trade agreement with the United States, they fear further loss of income.

Nor have Mexican teachers benefited from the free trade zones. In one, Ciudad Juarez, teachers' buying power has fallen by a third in the past decade.

But workers' fears haven't slowed negotiation of the yet-unwritten agreement. In fact, it's on the fast track. Last spring, at the Bush Administration's request, Congress promised to vote yes or no on the entire U.S.-Canada-Mexico free trade agreement, once the Administration presents it. By doing this, the lawmakers gave up their right to examine the treaty's parts separately and make amendments.

Canadians have organized to try to stop their government from joining the proposed three-way free trade agreement. In fact, they're trying to undo the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement as well. The Canadian Federation of Teachers—and many of the provincial unions that make it up—are part of Action Canada, a coalition of the country's major labor organizations and other social movements opposed to the agreements.

U.S. unions, including NEA, have taken the view that given the political climate, rather than try to prevent the adoption of the U.S.-Canada-Mexico free trade agreement, they will ask Congress to open up the treaty proposal for amendments.

Along with a group of U.S. Representatives, they're pressing for protection for U.S. workers' jobs, and for re-education of workers who lose their jobs when plants leave the country. U.S. unions also want to see the adoption of a charter that sets minimum standards to help protect Mexican workers' pay, health and safety, job rights, and right to organize, as well as the Mexican environment.

In short, as NEA President Keith Geiger told a meeting of U.S., Canadian, and Mexican teachers unions, "In order for us to adequately address the protection of working people, we must have well functioning, independent, and politically effective unions in all of the nations involved.

"If we don't, we'll have worker exploitation on all sides of the borders."

—Jane Power

Want To Know More?

- Mexico-U.S.-Canada Labor Project, American Labor Education Center, 2000 P St., N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036, 202/828-5170. Distributes print materials and the 13-minute video *$4 a Day? No Way!*
- Mobilization on Development, Trade, Labor, and Environment (MODTLE), 100 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002, 202/544-7198. Coalition working to get safeguards for workers and the environment in any future North American free trade pact.
- Action Canada Network, 251 Laurier Ave. West, Suite 904, Ottawa, ON K1P 5J6, Canada. A coalition of major labor organizations and other social movements. Distributes a newsletter and the 28-minute video *We Can Say No!*
- Common Frontiers Project, 11 Madison Avenue, Toronto, ON M5R 2S2, Canada, 416/961-7847. Coordinates solidarity work of labor, environmental, religious, and women's organizations in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

LOOKING BACK

End of an Era

After 23 years as the leader of the movement to improve children's television, Action for Children's Television (ACT) is disbanding.

The reason? According to Peggy Charren (photo above), ACT's founder and president (Meet, October 1990), ACT accomplished its major goal with the enactment of the 1990 Children's Television Act. That NEA-backed law requires broadcasters to serve the educational needs of children. It also sets limits on the number of commercials that can air during children's programs.

Now, says Charren, the fight for quality programming for children shifts to local communities, where it's up to community coalitions to push local stations to comply with the law. At the same time, adds Charren, citizens need to prod broadcasters to develop better educational programming for children.

ACT donated $125,000 to the Harvard University Graduate School of Education to fund a lecture series on children's television as well as a graduate fellowship for research in the field.

Reform's Rewards

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation has awarded $6.08 million to the Michigan Partnership for New Education (Innovation, October 1990). That's the largest single grant the Partnership has received since 1989.

The Partnership is a unique collaborative program that links the faculties of three area universities and seven public schools, dozens of student teachers, and hundreds of K-12 students in education reform.

Its goal: to transform schools in three Michigan communities into professional development schools for research, demonstration, and teacher education.

Together, school faculties—many of them Association members—of paired schools and universities conduct research, team-teach classes, and develop ways of improving curriculum and instruction. They also help student teachers learn their craft and push students to become critical thinkers.

Over the next five years, the Michigan Partnership hopes to fund some 25 additional professional development schools as well as a statewide information service.

Short Takes

► In Wales, Massachusetts, voters rejected a referendum to bail out its school system even though layoffs have increased one class size to 76 and others to 58 ('Who's to Blame,' December 1991). The voters did, however, approve a tax hike to reopen the town's trash dump.

► State lotteries have never quite lived up to expectations as major sources of education funds, even though they netted $8 billion in profits last year. In Florida, where school program cuts and class size hikes are legion, only 38 percent of every lottery dollar goes to education. In Ohio, 100 percent of the lottery proceeds are earmarked for education, but the proceeds contribute only six percent of school funds.

► You think you're a veteran? Still teaching at 76 is NEA member Mildred R. Stephenson, a first grade teacher in Prince George's County, Maryland (Heroes, October 1991). Her first teaching job was in 1934. NEA member Peter Gribbin points to the late Marada F. Adams as a teacher longevity winner. Adams spent 72 years in the classroom.

Students and Weapons: A Deadly Combination

The statistics are frightening. One in five high school students sometimes carries a gun, knife, or other weapon with the intention of using it if necessary.

The findings by researchers with the Centers for Disease Control paint an alarming portrait of today's teenagers. Nearly half of the 11,000 teenagers surveyed said they had been armed four or more times in the previous month.

The CDC findings and recent incidents of violent crime in public schools across the U.S. have raised greater concerns regarding school safety ('How Safe is Your School?' May/June 1989).

In a 1990 U.S. Education Department survey, 44 percent of teachers surveyed said they saw more disruptive behavior than five years ago; 42 percent said they witnessed at least one serious fight in the previous month; 20 percent said they had been threatened at school.

Across the country, school districts are taking tough measures to combat the rising threat of school violence.

In Prince George's County, Maryland, for example, local officials have proposed weapon-free zones around district schools.

In St. Louis, Missouri, police officers regularly patrol areas surrounding the city's schools.

Other districts use metal detectors at school entrances to reduce the number of weapons.

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SOUNDING BOARD

Like It Is

Pam Benham

NEA member Shirley Rau of Nampa, Idaho, tells Washington policymakers what school reform really means.

In October, several teachers and principals were asked to testify at a special hearing conducted by Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee Chair Edward Kennedy (D-MA). The educators were in Washington attending the Burger King Honors Excellence in Education symposium.

Shirley Rau of Idaho, one of four finalists for 1990-91 National Teacher of the Year, was one of the teachers who testified. Her testimony included some observations she'd already shared with Idaho audiences, but it was all new to the senators. Here's what Rau told the lawmakers.

There has been a lot of talk about education and education reform. We have education candidates for the legislature. We have an education President. Unfortunately, good intentions haven't translated into any action.

Classrooms of today are not much different from classrooms of yesterday. Students sit in rows facing a chalkboard at the front of the room. While technology has shaped office efficiency with computers, fax machines, and laser printers, the only indication of technological advancement in my classroom is an overhead projector.

Education reforms at the national level seem to center on a national standardized test of student progress in a national curriculum. Or on choice and merit pay for meritorious teachers. What they don't address are the growing problems facing society that are reflected in my classroom every day: dysfunctional families, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, and illiteracy.

Most students in my classes are living with one parent. Many are living alone or are living with grandparents or a friend's parents. Forty percent of my students qualify for Chapter 1 assistance. A large number qualify for free lunches. Two years ago, in my school district, 220 students dropped out of school; 25 of those dropouts were girls who were pregnant.

When Jon Quam of the National Teacher of the Year program called me to finalize plans for my trip to Washington, D.C., he reminded me that I was competing for national honors, and that the Washington-based selection committee was interested in national issues—not stories of Idaho students. I was angry when I hung up. If my kids aren't the national issues, then what are those issues?

In my mind I still hear the echoes of Melanie Allison's poem—"A dove/the clang of a metal door/a gun/the question to one who remains"—and I remember how she went into the bathroom between classes and shot herself in the chest.

I see Michelle Ransom, the side of her face swollen and bruised. She looks at the floor as she explains that the last time she filed a statement with Health and Welfare, she and her sister were put out of the house for two weeks. When they returned, her mother "beat the crap out of her."

These are the throwaway kids, a generation for whom no one feels responsible. Jami Mitchell wrote in a poem that she read to her graduating class in 1989:

For they believe they've
taught him well,
And they have.
They taught him how to love
How to love money
and power and fame
But not how to love himself.
They taught him how to worship
How to worship possessions and passions
But not chastity or humility.
And they taught him how to follow
How to follow whims.
But they never taught him
how to lead.
And he shall be left to a world he
doesn't even know,
Left to be devoured by roaches and rats.
Only the strong survive,
And no one ever told him he
had the strength.

After she graduated, Jami went on a Rotary Exchange to Zimbabwe. Her letters were filled with despair. She lived with racial intolerance. She saw survival in dirt-floored huts. She returned with questions of "Why?" and "How could they?" and "What can I do?" And she is depending on her education, not only to help her understand, but to provide her with the strength to confront the questions.

We need to help students see the difference they can make, to move them from values that center on what they have to values that center on what they have to give.

But teachers who feel powerless, victims of a system of textbook and copy paper rationing, of long hours and low pay, will not be able to empower children.

Educational reform is in its Vietnam era. We talk about numbers of body bags coming home. We show footage of losses. But we don't provide the necessary financial support, the necessary technical support, for success. We leave our teachers in the trenches alone, fighting disillusionment and despair.

Outstanding teachers—those teachers I represent—are leaving the profession. Last summer I read the story of Jessica Siegel, a New York City teacher. I felt her despair. I cried when she resigned in the final chapters of the book. She said: "A good teacher doesn't fall out of bed one morning as a burned-out case. A good teacher is ground down to mediocrity over weeks and months and years, and a good teacher who tries to resist learns that the millstone is an implacable adversary."

Many of my own mentors, my own colleagues, are wearing down. Jennifer Boyd, the 1988-89 Idaho State Teacher of the Year, resigned two weeks ago.

Reform fails one child at a time; one class at a time; one teacher at a time.

I was asked in my National Teacher of the Year interview if I could talk to one person who had the power to change education, who would I talk to and what would I say. It was an easy question to answer. Our President moved an entire nation to support a war in a country that we hadn't heard of before August. His words mobilized millions of people and billions of dollars.

How wonderful it would be if he could mobilize people to march in support of our children at home. We don't need education Presidents or education advocates. We need education activists.

We need people to share the burden. And it is not enough to talk on behalf of the children. We must act on their behalf. We need to reach out to shape a hand of hope to clasp them.

Shirley Rau, now in her 14th year of teaching, is an English teacher at Nampa (Idaho) High School.

RESEARCH CLUES

Ready or Not?

Teachers who question whether some five-year-olds are ready for first grade should take a closer look, says a psychology professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

A study of school readiness involving four-to-six-year-olds in Edmonton, California, shows that most five-year-olds entering first grade benefit from formal education, says Frederick Morrison of UNCG.

The study disputes the theory that these young children may be risking academic failure, lowered self-esteem, and later adaptation problems. The fear behind such concerns is that children this young are not developmentally ready for formal schooling.

Children in the study were tested at the beginning and end of the school year. During the year, the young first grade students demonstrated as much progress in academic achievement as did older first graders, the study revealed.

Morrison also found that the progress in reading, math, and cognitive skills demonstrated by the younger first graders far surpassed that made by children the same age attending kindergarten.

By the time a child reaches third grade, says Morrison, "I don't believe teachers can tell which child was the older or younger starting out. Our findings to date clearly show that, as a group, children not yet five and a half years of age can learn and make normal academic progress in a formal grade one program."

The Parent Paradox

Perhaps one of the most underappreciated facets of contemporary education is the role parents can play in their children's school. The results of parental involvement in the schools are legion.

According to an article by Erwin Flaxman and Morton Inger in the *ERIC Review*, (I:3) September 1991, "There is evidence that parent involvement leads to improved student achievement and significant long-term benefits, better school attendance, reduced school dropout rates, decreased delinquency, and lower pregnancy rates."

How are these accomplishments realized? In at least three ways: by parents being present in the school and assisting in school management; by parents participating in special parental training programs; and through family resource and support programs.

These are ways parents have been and can continue to be involved in education practice and decision making. But simple facts of demography make the participation of parents in schools particularly hard to arrange.

Over the last three decades, societal problems seem to have worked against greater parental involvement.

For instance, 40 percent of today's schoolchildren will have lived with a single parent by the time they reach 18; more than 20 percent live in poverty; 15 percent speak a non-English native language; and 15 percent have physical or mental disabilities.

Is it any surprise, then, that traditional ways of promoting parental involvement don't work for so many families?

So here's the central paradox of today's families: school participation may be most important for those facing serious social and psychological pressures—and they have the greatest difficulty taking part.

—Victoria Lytle

NEW WAVE

Creativity on Camera

More than a camera, the video camcorder has become a classroom tool and catalyst for learning.

In Daly City, California, fifth grade science teacher Lyn Chan uses her classroom camcorder to reinforce a lesson on anatomy. With colleague Rosanne Strucinski filming, Chan completes a dissection. Later on, Chan and her students can review the dissection.

In Lake Charles, Louisiana, elementary students, filming with a camcorder, put together an award-winning newscast. The objective—to learn about current events by reporting them.

"Today, this simple device can reinforce lessons, inspire creativity, or record 'teachable moments,' all with the push of a button."

—Lyn Chan
California Teacher

And in New Jersey, counselor Nancy Washington says it was the use of a camcorder that helped bridge the gap among fourth graders struggling to find a common bond and helped them grapple with problems that might have prompted them to drop out of school.

"Together, these fourth graders worked to develop videos dealing with everything from conflict resolution to coping with parental divorce," notes Washington. "Those videos are still used by fourth graders today."

Three different classrooms, three different uses for the same technology. In classrooms across the country, the video camcorder, a device that records images and sound directly onto videotape, is growing in popularity as a teaching tool.

"People used to buy camcorders just to record their children," notes Californian Lyn Chan, who was named a Christa McAuliffe Educator in 1988 by the NEA-created National Foundation for the Improvement of Education.

"Today," explains Chan, "this simple device can reinforce lessons, inspire creativity, or record 'teachable moments,' all with the push of a button."

Sheryl Abshire, a 1990 Christa McAuliffe Educator from Louisiana who created the award-winning news show with her elementary students, agrees. "Video camcorders are terrific teaching tools. They're lightweight, durable, and very easy to use."

Camcorders come in a variety of sizes—from the larger, shoulder-held model to the newer portable or 8-millimeter versions.

"With prices continuing to drop, camcorders are a great piece of technology for schools," adds Abshire. "As for working them, it's as easy as popping in a standard videotape and pressing *record*."

How else are camcorders being used to reinforce classroom lessons?

Two more ideas come from Manzanita Elementary School in Seaside, California. There, explains librarian Don Livermore, both students and teachers have turned filmmaker.

"Many students are doing their own research by making video portfolios," Livermore says. "They conduct interviews, film around the community and school, then come back to the library to use our editing equipment.

"In the process," he continues, "they learn about their subjects, about themselves, and about technology's role in their lives."

But the students aren't the only video producers around, adds Livermore. To raise interest in reading, Manzanita teachers used the school's camcorder equipment to film homemade commercials for some of their favorite books.

"One camera can have a thousand uses," says Livermore. "All you need is inspiration."

To McAuliffe Educator Chan, the camcorder helps students develop a critical skill in science—observation. "If students review their own experiments, science becomes reality," adds Chan.

Louisiana's Abshire says video technology also fills an important role in professional development. "Teachers can use it to critique their own performance in the classroom. The tape—not for evaluation but strictly for personal growth—will allow you to observe your own techniques and watch class reactions."

Rosanne Strucinski, a speech pathologist at California's Skyline Elementary, created a video club four years ago to help her students and to film Chan's class. Through the years the video clubs have created a variety of documentaries used not only in her school but throughout the state.

"Our video documentary on how to develop a science fair is requested all the time by teachers at other schools," says Strucinski.

"And right now, the local cable station has a weekly news segment in which our students read the news and show their documentaries.

"Having a camcorder has helped us create possibilities far beyond the classroom."

And, Strucinski adds, the camcorder can do even more.

"One of our first grade teachers used the video to show her students' progress to their parents," explains Strucinski. "Those parents watched as their children learned, and they began to understand what teaching's all about."

—Anita Merina

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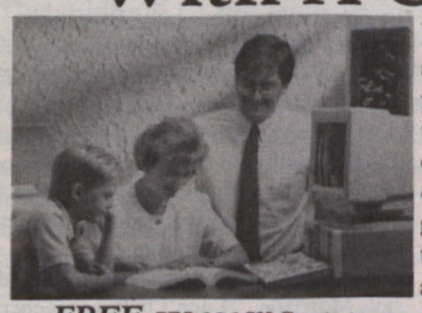

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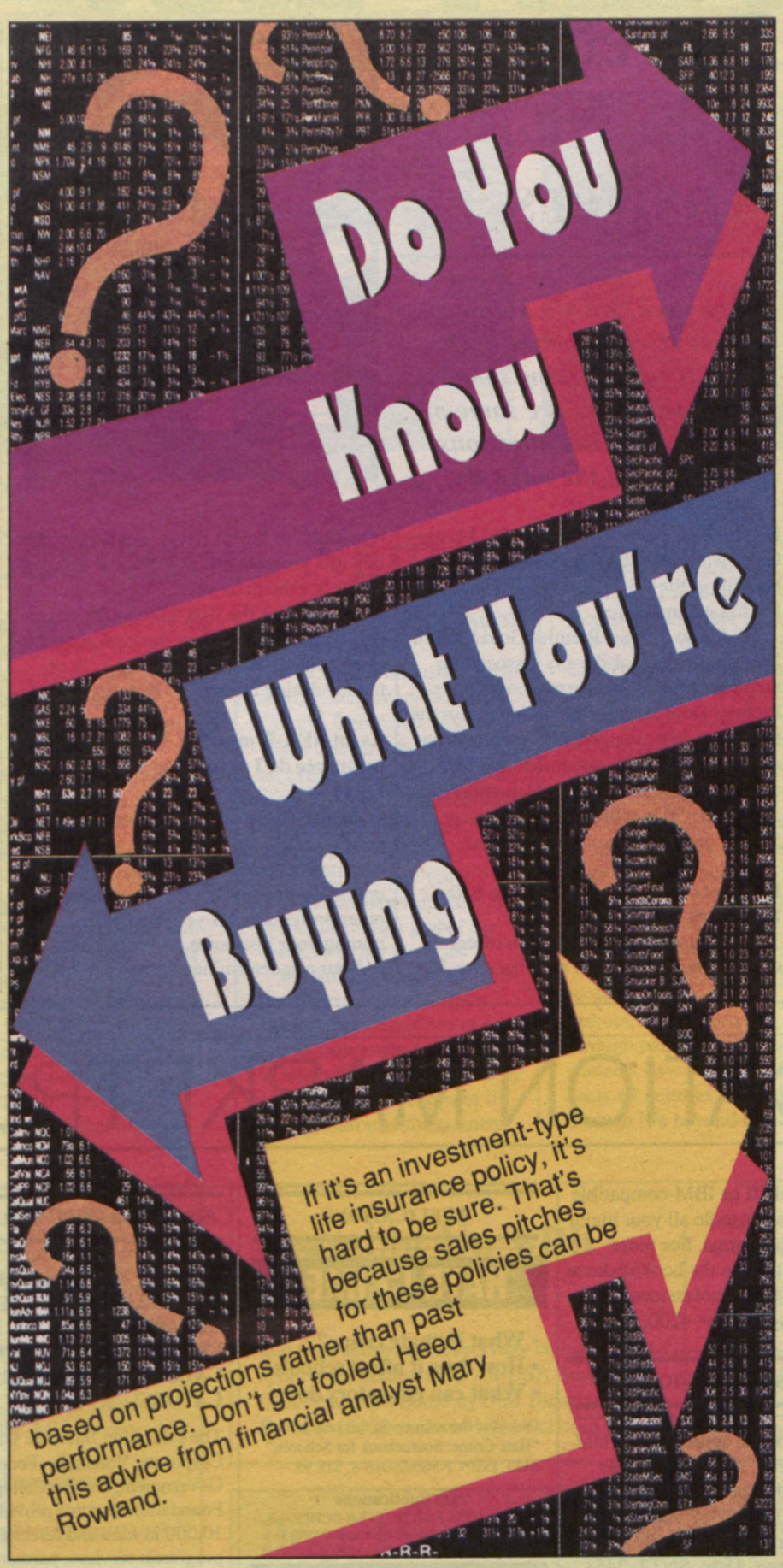
Do You Know What You're Buying
If it's an investment-type life insurance policy, it's hard to be sure. That's because sales pitches for these policies can be based on projections rather than past performance. Don't get fooled. Heed this advice from financial analyst Mary Rowland.

Be forewarned about insurance products touting high returns on investments. They can be highly speculative, and you may not be told in advance.

The problem has escalated in the past few years for two reasons: Insurance policies have become more complex. And many companies have given agents software and allowed them to devise policy illustrations, making their own assumptions about future interest rates. The resulting abuses have caused concern throughout the industry.

"Many people in the industry believe that illustrations are not being handled well," says Robbin Derry, professor of ethics at the American College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

American College trains insurance professionals and financial planners who earn the chartered life underwriter (CLU) and chartered financial planner (ChFP)) designations.

"The agents feel pressured to use an interest rate that will help sell the product," says Derry. "Many agents say they do it because that's what the competition does."

Meanwhile, you should know enough about how a policy works to be able to ask an agent some probing questions about how an illustration of future earnings was done.

An investment-type policy—which might be called a whole-life, cash value, universal life, or variable life policy—has three basic cost elements.

They are: 1) the charge for administrative expenses, including commissions; 2) the charge for insurance, which is called the "mortality charge"; and 3) the savings or investment portion, which is called the cash value. Some policies also have additional bonuses, which are often not guaranteed.

Although the agent will generally refuse to break these elements out for you, the company considers each of them when it does the illustration. For example, when you pay the premium, the company will take out the money for expenses and put the balance of the premium into the policy's cash value.

The cash value will then accumulate, tax-deferred, at the interest rate the company credits to your policy.

The interest rate that is credited to your policy depends on the rate the insurer earns on its investments. With interest rates trending lower, the rates that can be credited to policies have moved down as well.

Generally, at the end of each year, the company announces the rate it will credit to policies the following year.

Each of the elements that goes into an illustration is subject to significant changes, even in the short term. For example, The Guardian, a New York insurance company, credited policyholders with a rate of 13.25 percent in 1986, according to Armand de Palo, chief actuary.

That rate drifted down over each subsequent year as interest rates moved lower. In 1992, Guardian is crediting 10 percent.

The cost of insurance decreases, too, as life expectancies continue to improve. And company expenses can change markedly. Still, a company may run an illustration that compounds a cash value increase going out 20, 30, 40 years and more into the future.

Consequently, some eager consumers buy a product based on that cash value. "It's like buying a mutual fund based strictly on a 20-year projection of how it might perform," says Richard B. Freeman, manager at Coopers & Lybrand in New York.

Worse yet, some insurers and agents today are using unrealistically high interest rates. "There's nothing that says they can't show 12 percent or 13 percent even though they're only paying 8 percent," says Andrew Wray, a financial planner at Wray, Fugitt & Howard in Memphis. "Something like that might change the cash value by 50 percent over time."

Some companies "project" that their expenses and the charge for insurance will magically disappear over time. For example, Judy A. Faucett, an actuary and principal at Coopers & Lybrand in New York, says she saw an illustration that used a charge for insurance that's only 3 percent of that dictated by current life expectancy tables.

There are no guarantees. The projections simply show what might happen under a rosy set of circumstances. There are some state regulations that require companies to demonstrate their guaranteed rate—which is set by law and is usually 4 percent—and the rate they are currently paying.

But they also allow illustrations on universal life, one particularly popular product, to show one other "reasonable rate." Unfortunately, "the law does not define 'reasonable'," de Palo says.

Last year, the Society of Actuaries appointed a task force to look into the matter. The group issued a preliminary report in October detailing many problem areas and making recommendations for reform. Faucett, who is chairperson for the task force, said: "We think there is a real problem."

When you are shown an illustration, ask the agent if it is based on the company's current practice. Ask specifically about the interest rate and if that is what the company is currently paying. Ask about expenses and mortality charges, too.

Ask: "Are you projecting any improvements in these areas or is this based on current charges?" If the agent says he or she doesn't know or is confused about the issue, ask to have someone clarify these issues.

Given that interest rates have been trending lower over the last decade, you might ask to have the illustration run using a rate that is one or two percentage points lower than the company's current rate.

Finally, ask about any bonuses or special enhancements in the policy. Most consumer experts don't like special bonuses because they're not guaranteed, and they make policies more difficult to compare.

One example is a bonus interest rate given the first year. "I really don't like that because it takes people's eyes off the ball," Freeman says.

Of even more concern is the increasing use of "persistency bonuses." For example, an agent might tell you that if you keep your policy in force for 20 years, you'll receive a special bonus. It might be a bonus interest rate, or the company might agree not to take any expenses out of your policy.

Often these bonuses depend on a number of policyholders "lapsing" or dropping their policies in the early years so that the money is available to pay bonuses to those remaining.

This seems a safe bet. Industry statistics show that 17 percent of policyholders drop their policies after the first year, according to the Life Insurance Marketing and Research Association. About half remain in the seventh year, and less than 25 percent are left after 20 years.

But, Faucett points out, if the bonus is attractive enough, more policyholders might hold onto their policies. In that event, there will be no money to pay the bonuses.

—Mary Rowland

LOOKING AHEAD TO RETIREMENT

Preretirees Ask, NEA Answers

Every week, NEA's Member Services Center hears from those of you thinking about retirement. Here are some of the most frequent questions you ask—and the answers.

How can I maintain my participation in NEA Special Services programs after I'm retired?

The easiest way is to join NEA-Retired (NEA-R), if you're not already a member. Except for DUES-TAB and programs relevant only to persons in the work force—like disability insurance—NEA-R members can continue to take full advantage of Special Services.

Please note: NEA Life Members—as well as employed members in any other categories of membership—don't automatically become members of NEA-R upon retirement.

NEA-R is an affiliate of NEA, and as such requires separate membership. But you don't have to wait until you retire to join. Membership is open to active education employees, too.

If you're a retiring NEA member and haven't already joined NEA-R, you can do so through the NEA state affiliate where your retirement takes place. NEA-R membership is available on an annual or lifetime basis.

If you choose not to join NEA-R, you can continue to participate in some insurance and financial programs on an individual basis—although you might have to pay a higher price and/or lose some "member-only" features. Your policy or contract should provide the details.

Does NEA offer any programs exclusively to NEA-R members?

Yes. NEA offers the Guaranteed Issue Life Insurance Plan and the Retired MasterCard, which has the same features and benefits as the "School Days" MasterCard but has no annual fee.

NEA also offers a Premier Gold Card to NEA-R members. Like any Association member, NEA-R members who hold the Premier Gold card pay no annual fee for the first year. After that, NEA-R members pay an annual fee of $6, rather than the $15 annual fee paid by the general membership.

And the $6 is refunded if you charge $3,000 or more in any calendar year.

How does the Guaranteed Issue Life Plan work?

The Guaranteed Issue Life Plan offers coverage to any NEA-R member over 55 regardless of health status. Because of the risk this presents, full coverage is delayed until after the third year.

Still, during the first three years, coverage is always more than the total contributions paid. That means you can't "lose" money during the limited benefits period.

As an NEA-R member, how much life insurance do I need? And how much can I get?

Insurance needs differ from person to person, so it's impossible to give a blanket recommendation. NEA Special Services urges you to consult a financial planner or other professional if you need help determining your insurance coverage needs.

Your age determines the amount of coverage you can get through NEA Special Services. If you're 65, for example, you could apply for as much as $100,000 of coverage under the Accidental Death and Dismemberment program, $60,000 under the NIE Life Insurance program, and $6,000 under the Guaranteed Issue Life Insurance program.

What happens to my DUES-TAB coverage when I retire?

It stops. DUES-TAB was designed to cover active employees in the field of education.

But if you're an NEA-R member who was covered by DUES-TAB before retirement, you may convert your DUES-TAB into a $1,000 life insurance policy costing $32 every six months.

You must apply for this conversion no later than November 1 of the year following your retirement.

Can I cash in my DUES-TAB coverage?

No. DUES-TAB has no cash value, nor can it be borrowed against.

As you can see, NEA-Retired membership and NEA Special Services go well together. They're constantly working together to identify new programs that will benefit NEA-R members.

If you have a question about how these two organizations can help you create a more prosperous retirement, contact NEA Member Services Center, 51 Monroe St., Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850, 800/637-4635.

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Photographs by Joe Di Dio

McAuliffe Educators Named

Technology is the watchword that unites five teachers from California, Illinois, Michigan, South Dakota, and Virginia. They've been named Christa McAuliffe Educators by the Christa McAuliffe Institute of the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE), established by NEA in 1969.

The teachers were cited for their leadership in the use of telecommunications to promote global understanding among their students.

The Christa McAuliffe Institute, created in memory of the teacher-astronaut who lost her life in the 1986 Challenger space tragedy, is dedicated to helping educators explore the art and science of teaching. The honors go annually to teachers who exemplify McAuliffe's leadership, excellence, and innovation.

Each of the five winners—designated pioneers in school restructuring—will receive a $5,000 honorarium from NFIE. They'll also help plan a 10-day summer conference for 20 other teachers. NFIE will name that group, the Christa McAuliffe Fellows, in April.

The theme for the conference: "Preparing All Students for the 21st Century: Using Telecommunications to Restructure Education for Global Understanding."

The 1992 Christa McAuliffe Educators are:

► **Carol Gilkenson**, Washington Elementary School, Covina, California, is a third grade teacher who's witnessed an evolution in the classroom since she integrated technology into her curriculum. She uses laser-video discs, a computer scanner, still video camera, and on-line computer networks to bring a global perspective to her students.

► **Jim Zimmerman**, Thomas Paine School, Urbana, Illinois, has shared his expertise in using new technologies to teach fifth-grade science by conducting workshops in Illinois and around the country. In his classroom, students use computers, scanners, video discs, and robotics, and write their own computer programs.

► **Marilyn Schlief**, Garden City High School, Garden City, Michigan, is a global education consultant who connects over 5,800 students in her community with students all over the world.

After teaching Japanese language classes for two hours each morning, Schlief spends the rest of her day on student projects that incorporate advanced communications.

► **Merle Misty Brave**, Little Wound School, Kyle, South Dakota, shows her sixth through twelfth grade science students how technology connects all cultures and links them to life beyond the school and the 85-mile stretch of land that encompasses their Pine Ridge Reservation.

► **Bonnie Bracey**, Ashlawn Elementary, Arlington, Virginia, uses telecommunications to introduce her fourth and fifth grade students to a wide range of global ideas and activities. Her students work in cooperative, computerized learning groups and use computers to tackle issues that revolve around the environment and outer space.

In announcing the new Christa McAuliffe Educators, NFIE Executive Director Donna Rhodes said, "We must encourage educators to use technology to promote more comprehensive learning and to meet the needs of today's diverse student populations."

National Teacher Day Set for Tuesday, May 5

Get ready to celebrate National Teacher Day 1992—a day designed to provide public salutes to teachers. This year's theme: "Teaching Transforms Lives." Teacher Day falls during Teacher Appreciation Week (May 3-9), sponsored by the National PTA.

"Teacher Day provides a wonderful opportunity for citizens across the country to pay tribute to those unsung heroes who teach and who change lives through their work," says NEA President Keith Geiger.

To help local Associations celebrate, NEA is sending each one a kit containing sample Teacher Day radio spots, a suggested news release to announce the National Teacher Day observance, camera-ready clip art, and a printed proclamation for public officials to sign.

The kit also includes a booklet full of Teacher Day project ideas that worked last year. Local leaders will find projects that bring together everyone who cares about the community's schools: Association members, community organizations, public officials, merchants, the media, school officials, parents, and students.

Ideas range from hosting a Celebration of Teaching to encouraging students to prepare for teaching careers to sponsoring a Parent-Teacher Walk-a-thon to raise funds for special student programs.

Teaming Up with *USA Today*

Top high school achievers may compete for a spot on the sixth annual All-USA Academic First Team, sponsored by *USA Today* and NEA. By May 15, 20 students will be chosen for the team. Another 40 will win spots on the second and third teams.

All high school principals should have received nomination forms. Forms may also be obtained by calling 703/558-5613. Nominations must be signed by a teacher and principal and are due March 6. NEA members will serve as judges for the preliminary and final rounds of the competition.

Bone Marrow Registrants Sought

What if you were told you could provide a small blood donation that might enable you to save the life of a stranger?

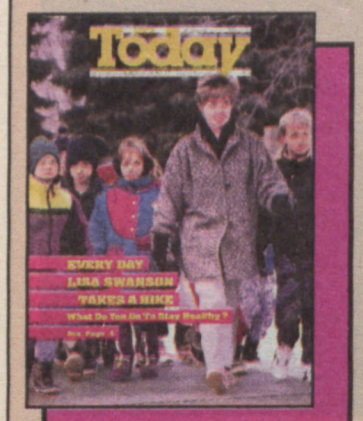
That's the offer of the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP), which matches victims of fatal blood disease with unrelated donors. The odds against finding a match are high: 20,000 to 1. That may explain why only 430 such transplants have taken place so far.

Still, the registry is looking for help. You can volunteer if you're between 18 and 55 and in good health. All you need do is take a blood test to "type" your blood for basic human leukocyte antigens. Your chances of being called are less than 20 percent.

If you are called, you'll take a few more tests to confirm the match. The process of donating bone marrow involves being placed under general anesthesia while the marrow is extracted from your pelvic bones. The result is a bit of aching for the next 10 days—and possibly a life saved. For information about the National Marrow Donor Program, call 800/654-1247.

NATIONAL MARROW DONOR PROGRAM

Letters



Sexist Surgeon?

I believe Antonia Novello is doing and will continue to do an excellent job as Surgeon General (Meet, February). I was disturbed, however, to read in your interview of her a couple of remarks that struck me as sexist.

In answering a question about new perspectives she brought to her office, she said, "Today's health agenda lends itself more...to a sensible and sensitive approach. As a woman, I don't have to be taught sense and sensitivity. They come naturally." Is that to imply that men don't come by sense and sensitivity naturally but have to be taught such things, presumably by women?

In discussing the need to bring adversaries together on important issues like alcohol advertising, she was quoted as saying, "That's what makes a woman Surgeon General different: a woman is more likely than a man to bring points from both sides to the discussion." Here there is no implication, just a plain statement of her belief.

I think it's essential for someone in a responsible position to have confidence in her ability and in the skills she brings to a task. But having shrugged off many suggestions in the media that women are somehow superior to men at this business of being human, I chose not to let these remarks go without a response. I think it makes no sense in an educational publication to imply that men cannot elicit both sides of a debate and are not equally capable with women of basic human qualities. Or am I being too sensitive?

Dwight Boud
New Providence, New Jersey

Debating Dissection

As a 27-year veteran of biology teaching, I read with great distress David Bates' "con" side of the frog-dissection debate (February). In fact, Sally Hillstrom's "pro" arguments also fall short of the mark in defense of classroom dissection.

Mr. Bates is to be most criticized for his argument that the use of frogs in classroom dissection depletes a natural resource. That is absolutely untrue, and if he doesn't know it's untrue, then he doesn't deserve the title of "outstanding teacher."

Frogs are far from endangered, and the removal of a harvestable number is no threat to their populations. Further, I believe Mr. Bates, in spite of his age, may have fallen into that group of contemporary biology teachers of urban origins who do not understand one of the most basic natural phenomena: death.

Today's new biology teachers are enthralled with the mechanics of the gene, and rightly so. But genetic engineering—this fascinating new field—is just that, engineering. It's NOT biology.

There's absolutely no substitute, especially not the computer screen, for having a student open up a frog and see what real internal organs look like and how they are organized inside a body cavity.

Further, the frog, except for the absence of a diaphragm, is an excellent miniaturization of the human internal anatomy.

Dissection activities do not have to be done because of our need to train doctors, as some argue. Rather, it has to be done in order to train our *entire* population about the realities of living organisms. It is, of course, also important to devise and explain the most humane manner possible of killing the organism.

Today there are just too many students who grow up thinking that heat comes from the furnace, food from the supermarket, clothes from the department store, and water from the faucet. They see themselves as apart from nature and not a part of it, and, in my humble opinion, the use of a computer screen as a replacement for dissection is one more step into the abyss of a world of fantasy!

The fact that urban youngsters are so far removed from an understanding of life and nature is appalling to me, and the fault lies with my fellow technology-oriented biology teachers—including the leadership of the National Association of Biology Teachers—who have cowered before the extremists of the animal-rights movement!

Robert L. Ballantyne
Boyertown, Pennsylvania

Hero Not Zero

Your "Heroes & Zeroes" column criticizes Gov. Engler of Michigan for "kicking 83,000 people off welfare" (February). These people were able-bodied adults who can and should be working.

In my 25 years of teaching in Michigan I have watched the state budget for education go from almost 40 percent of the total state budget to around 26 percent. The welfare budget has increased steadily in those years. The money for this increase came from education.

The politicians are more interested in "buying" the votes of adults than in educating our children. Kids can't vote. People receiving aid can.

Gov. Engler firmly believes that education is the way out of poverty and welfare. His budget for this year reflects that—he asked for a six percent increase in education.

The NEA and our state Association seem to ignore the Republican Party because the Republicans don't believe in spending a lot of money for welfare.

They would rather take this money and put it into education. I think that it's about time that we woke up to this fact and stopped supporting so many Democrats.

Adolf Pelzer
Benton Harbor, Michigan

Endorsements

I support my organization's endorsement of various educational goals, because of my belief that the NEA has collective and individual knowledge about educational needs. Please continue educational endorsements.

The NEA likely has less knowledge about social security, medicare, gun control, religious instruction, and reproductive rights.

I believe that the organization shouldn't spend financial and political capital in areas where its opinions are likely to be taken less seriously than in education-related matters. To so speak is to risk diluting NEA's effectiveness as a representative of students and teachers.

Dan R. Winslow
Slatestone Hills, North Carolina

Cheers

Just a note to thank you for a couple of courageous articles in the December 1991 issue: "Supreme Court Outlook: Ominous Days Ahead," and "What Every Kid Should Know About...Columbus."

Keep up the good work.

Fran McBride
Caldwell, New Jersey

Don't Wait So Long

I was pleased to finally see *NEA Today* feature a guidance counselor on the cover of the December issue. After leaving education for seven years and returning three years ago, I have been somewhat disappointed in the lack of acknowledgment our organization gives to the efforts of counselors.

All six of the guidance counselors in our school are NEA members. I believe the Association needs to do a better job of reminding all of its members that all educators must work together to improve our services to the children.

I sincerely hope I will not have to wait another three years before another guidance counselor is mentioned by *NEA Today*.

Susan B. Robertson
Danville, Virginia

El Salvador's Future

NEA members around the country have been gratified to read that peace accords have finally been signed by the government of El Salvador. This is good news, but the struggle of the people of El Salvador is far from over.

Mario Medrano, who represented ANDES (The National Assoication of El Salvadoran Educators) on a U.S. tour last October, spoke to teachers around the country asking for our continued support.

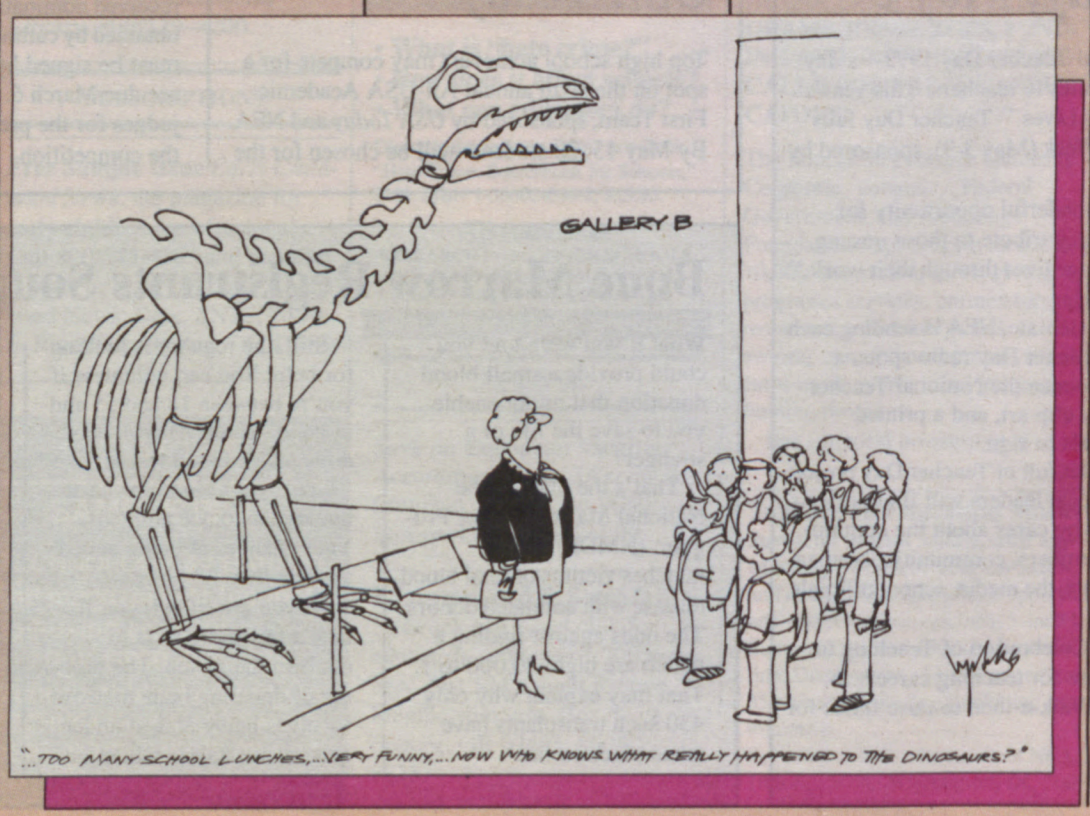
He said it was only because of intense international pressure that the Salvadoran government came to the bargaining table and that ongoing pressure will be necessary for the agreements to be fulfilled.

If NEA members in every state write or call their congressional representatives to sign on to the McHugh-Moakley bill, H. R. 3782, to end all U.S. military aid to the government of El Salvador, we could make a big difference.

We also need to continue the NEA's boycott of Folger's coffee until land reform is a reality and the death squads are really gone.

Our colleagues in ANDES need our support if they are fulfill their mission of providing free education to all the children of El Salvador in an atmosphere free of violence and injustice.

Mary Alice Herbert
Putney, Vermont



Travel Opportunity

NEA's Center for Innovation is helping to organize a three-week summer trip to Scandinavia and the Baltics for U.S. and European K-12 teachers.

From July 11 to August 2, educators from the United States and Western and Central Europe will travel together exploring changes that have been taking place in the Baltic republics during the last decade. Teachers will also establish international links that would bring global studies into their classrooms.

The trip's cost is $1,980, plus round-trip airfare from the United States to Copenhagen, Denmark. That includes all room, board, and travel within Europe.

Graduate credit (tuition additional) is available through the University of Southern Maine.

For information, contact Sylvia Seidel, Assistant Director, NEA National Center for Innovation, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 202/822-7906.

Debate

Should Teachers Be Judged By Their Students' Progress?

YES

Melinda Bernal, who has taught at the elementary level for 14 years, currently represents teachers on the Sunnyside (Arizona) Career Ladder Advisory Committee. She is a past president of the Sunnyside Education Association, and now serves on SEA's Executive Board.

NO

Eileen Simmons teaches English at East Central High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She is the Tulsa Teacher of the Year for 1991-1992. She serves on the Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association Board of Directors and the Oklahoma Education Association communications committee.

Don Wheeler

The time has come for teachers to accept responsibility for the progress of their students. How well and how much students progress in school can and should be a part of the evaluation of teachers' work.

The key issue here is how we define—and measure—a teacher's success.

I'm well aware that judging teachers on the progress of their students is a more complex task than judging factory workers on their production of widgets. But the reality is that the call for more "accountability" for teachers isn't fading. As our educational system continues to go under the microscope, the call for accountability will likely get louder.

We don't have to put our hands over our ears. I firmly believe that if we help shape accountability it doesn't have to be the monster we fear.

Given that accountability is here to stay, we have a choice to make. Do we, as educators, want to live up to unreal expectations? Do we want to be forced to accept someone else's standards?

If not, we can lead the way in developing an accountability system that's fair, that's based on standards we decide, and that will work to improve education for our students.

We can move beyond the real reasons teachers are hesitant to be accountable for the progress of their students: fear of the unknown, fear of unrealistic and educationally unsound standards, and fear of the possible abuse of power by those who will be doing the judging.

These concerns can be addressed when we, teachers, play an active role in the creation of accountability plans.

In the Sunnyside Unified School District where I work, student progress is part of the evaluation for our career ladder program, now in its sixth year.

Throughout the evaluation, participating teachers plan for and measure their students' progress.

At first, the idea of measuring student progress was met with fear, distrust, and a certain amount of doubt. But over a six-year period, teachers, administrators, and the Association have taken an active role in the career ladder's creation and implementation.

One example is teachers' participation on the Career Ladder Advisory Committee. Nine of the group's 13 members are teachers. It is they who created the Plan and guided the development of our peer evaulation component that is fair and equitable. The Advisory Committee monitors the Plan's implementation on an ongoing basis.

Once teachers got over feeling threatened, they were able to take advantage of the added opportunities and assistance this system offers them to ensure student and teacher success. These changes have created a greater focus on student progress and an increased focus on the planning for student success.

It's critical that teachers view the program as fair and consistent in order to allow trust to develop. When looking at the progress of your students, standards set by others may or may not be relevant for your particular classroom situation. That's why the teacher, following specific criteria, determines how to document the progress of their students. This documentation is submitted in a portfolio at the end of the year and evaluated by a team of peer readers. .

Sure there are plenty of reasons why some students will achieve less than others—reasons we have little control over, like home environment, diet, and past academic success. But these reasons shouldn't limit a teacher's expectations for a student's learning. These factors outside our control shouldn't serve as excuses for teachers who find it easier to lower expectations.

As professional educators, we must end the cycle that has long been perpetuated for those children who, for whatever reasons, come to us functioning below grade level. We must do our best to be accountable for their progress; after all, they're counting on us.

In Sunnyside, because we've focused on planning for and measuring student progress, student achievement has grown over the years. A similar system can work in your district.

Teachers should be held responsible for their students' progress only to the extent that the teacher controls the situation. And in most cases, teachers don't control enough of the situation to accept the credit or blame—especially if the standard of measurement is standardized test scores alone.

For much of my career in the Tulsa Public Schools, I taught in predominantly minority schools. My outrage at the unfairness of standardized testing began there and grew each year.

In one of the schools, I helped pilot a team-taught English and social studies class of college-bound students. Because this was before the current overemphasis on test scores, my team teacher and I were relatively free to assess the needs of our students and teach to those real needs.

Skills were certainly a part of our curriculum, but, more importantly, the students helped us identify political empowerment as a critical need. When we first suggested inviting public officials to speak to the class, students couldn't believe anyone important would come to visit them.

Before the school year was over, the students had invited city, state, and school board officials into the classroom for interviews. They took it upon themselves to visit the governor's office, and they asked to see him. Along the way, the students learned writing, speaking, and researching skills.

Perhaps their standardized test scores improved. I don't think that either of us checked. We knew we had taught them something more important than analogies on a test or the "correct" answer to where a comma should be placed in a sentence.

The teachers in today's schools are working harder than ever, teaching more than ever, and struggling against situations over which they have no control.

Teachers do not control:

► whether the student had breakfast that morning or dinner the night before.

► girls who are pregnant or who are worried about being pregnant.

► boys who are worried about their girlfriends being pregnant.

► students who sleep through class because: (a) they were working until 2 a.m. to provide support for their families, or (b) they didn't get any sleep the night before because mom (or girlfriend) and dad (or boyfriend) were fighting, or because the homeless shelter where they live was too noisy, or (c) someone in the family with a drug and/or alcohol problem kept them up all night.

► the utility companies that turned off the power because the family couldn't pay the bills.

► whether the student's home has books or magazines.

► students who aren't and, in spite of the teacher's best efforts, won't become motivated.

Even when students don't have these problems, teachers exert very little control over students' lives.

We do exert significant influence in our students' lives, although most of it can't be measured on any standardized test. In many cases, students— whose later lives are the most reliable measurement—are unaware of the teacher's influence until several years later. Teaching, after all, is an act of faith based on the belief that we are affecting the future.

In the movie *Dead Poet's Society*, Robin Williams shows the absurdity of measuring poetry in a scene where he solemnly graphs intersecting lines, which according to the instructions will show the "greatness" of the poem.

Emily Dickinson's definition of poetry is just the opposite. "When I read it...it feels like the top of my head is coming off." What makes poetry great is how the measurable variables—rhyme, rhythm, word choice—work together to affect the reader emotionally.

Teaching, much like poetry, is effective in evoking measurable and emotional responses. Standardized test scores, used correctly, can help a teacher assess students' needs.

But to reduce teaching to only these measurable aspects—including judging a teacher by student progress on standardized test scores—is to remove the poetry from our profession.

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